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Aruba TODAY

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Cain't Take the Heat

Defiant Cain suspends bid for presidency

Herman Cain shakes hands with supporters after speaking at a campaign event he held in Atlanta. Cain suspended his presidential campaign on Saturday, pledging that he "would not go away," even as he abandoned hope of winning the Republican nomination. (Philip Scott Andrews/The New York Times)

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ABC Celebrates Christmas



Constance Marie, left, Katie Leclerc and Vanessa Marano attend ABC Family's "25 Days of Christmas" Winter Wonderland party at Rockefeller Center, in New York, Sunday Dec. 4, 2011. (AP Photo/Charles Sykes)



From left to right, Miss Iceland World Fanney Ingvarsdottir, partly seen, Miss Bikini World Romania Diana Boanca, wearing dark glasses, Miss Canada World Denise Garrido, Miss California World Jennipha Lauren Nielsen, centre behind, Miss Slovenia Universe Marika Savsek, in pink, and Miss Ireland World Emma Waldron interact with Indian schoolchildren at a charity event in Amritsar, India over the weekend. Beauty queens from six countries are visiting various cities across India for charity events under the Healthy Kids Happy Kids Foundation.

(AP Photo/Prabhjot Gill)

Foreclosure notices to Web?

STEVE BOUSQUET

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TALLAHASSEE .-In the midst of Florida's housing crisis, some state lawmakers want to move legal notices of foreclosures from newspapers to the Internet, sparking a debate over access to information and charges of favoritism. Newspapers publish hundreds of thousands of small-type legal notices a year, which are required before a lender can foreclose on a home. The revenue is lucrative for business publications that depend heavily on legal ads. Supporters say the change is long overdue, as newspaper readership declines and more and more commerce is transacted electronically.

Critics, largely newspapers, say Web-only notices would hurt the poor and elderly, who aren't computer-savvy. They also claim the legislation is tailored to enrich a single entity, Albertelli Law in Tampa, which is lobbying for the bill and operates PREO.com, a foreclosure website that calls itself "the complete default marketplace."

The same firm is under investigation by Attorney General Pam Bondi's office following 16 consumer complaints alleging shoddy legal practices such as the use of fraudulent signatures, a practice known as "robo-signing."

PREO's Tallahassee lobbyist, Sandra Mortham, calls it "absolutely fallacious" that the bill favors her client. She said that while the idea was inspired by the client, attorney and PREO founder James Albertelli, "this is not about him doing it exclusively."

"Newspapers have had a monopoly on this for 60 years. I understand why they would want to keep it," says Mortham, a former Pinellas lawmaker and secretary of state. "People might as well get used to this. It's going to come."

Albertelli says PREO once got several hundred thousand "hits" or views each month, but that has declined to about 100,000 a month. As for the investigation, he said: "None of the complaints are meritorious."

Sen. Steve Wise, R-Jacksonville, and Rep. Dennis Baxley, R-Ocala, are sponsoring the bills, which specify that to qualify, a publicly accessible website must attract at least 100,000 hits a month from unique visitors.

Opponents say PREO.com is the only site in Florida that meets the standard.

They are distributing fliers to lawmakers noting that Albertelli's firm is under investigation.

"Public notice particularly notice of proceedings of legal actions that could take someone's home is critical to preserving private property rights, as well as the right of due process," the fliers state. □

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ABC TOURS

Defiant Cain suspends bid for presidency

Continued from Front

SUSAN SAULNY

© 2011 New York Times

An unapologetic and defiant Herman Cain suspended his presidential campaign Saturday, pledging that he "would not go away," even as he abandoned hope of winning the Republican nomination in the face of escalating accusations of sexual misconduct. "As of today, with a lot of prayer and soul searching, I am suspending my presidential campaign," Cain said at a rally in Atlanta, surrounded by supporters chanting his name. "Because of the continued distractions, the continued hurt caused on me and my family, not because we are not fighters. Not because I'm not a fighter." In suspending his candidacy, as opposed to saying that he was ending his bid, Cain, according to campaign finance lawyers, maintains an ability to accept money to pay for his campaign so far and potentially to finance the new venture that he called his Plan B: to travel the country promoting his tax and foreign policy plans. The collapse of Cain's campaign came as a new Des Moines Register poll showed that his supporters appeared to be gravitating toward Newt Gingrich, the former House



Herman Cain waves to the crowd before speaking at a campaign event he held in Atlanta. Cain suspended his presidential campaign on Saturday, pledging that he "would not go away," even as he abandoned hope of winning the Republican nomination.

(Erik S. Lesser/The New York Times)

speaker. According to the poll, Gingrich is backed by 25 percent of likely Republican caucus-goers, followed by Rep. Ron Paul of Texas with 18 percent and Mitt Romney with 16 percent. The poll was conducted before Cain suspended his campaign, and it showed him with the support of just 8 percent of respondents, a sharp drop

from previous polls.

The other Republican candidates are also in single digits. In the previous Iowa poll, conducted in late October, 7 percent supported Gingrich, while Cain was the choice of 23 percent. Romney said Saturday that the race remained wide open. "I don't think people have really settled down in a final way to decide who

they're going to support in the nomination process," he said, adding, "I hope they give us a good careful look."

Cain said he would issue an endorsement soon. With his wife, Gloria, at his side at the Atlanta rally, Cain said the accusations of sexual harassment and of a 13-year affair were untrue. "I'm at peace with

my God," he said. "I'm at peace with my wife, and she is at peace with me." Cain exited much the way he entered. The circuslike atmosphere — complete with numerous delays, barbecue, a blues band and supporters in Colonial-era dress — was in keeping with the campaign's irreverence and disarray since its inception. □

In Iowa, Gingrich streaks past Romney

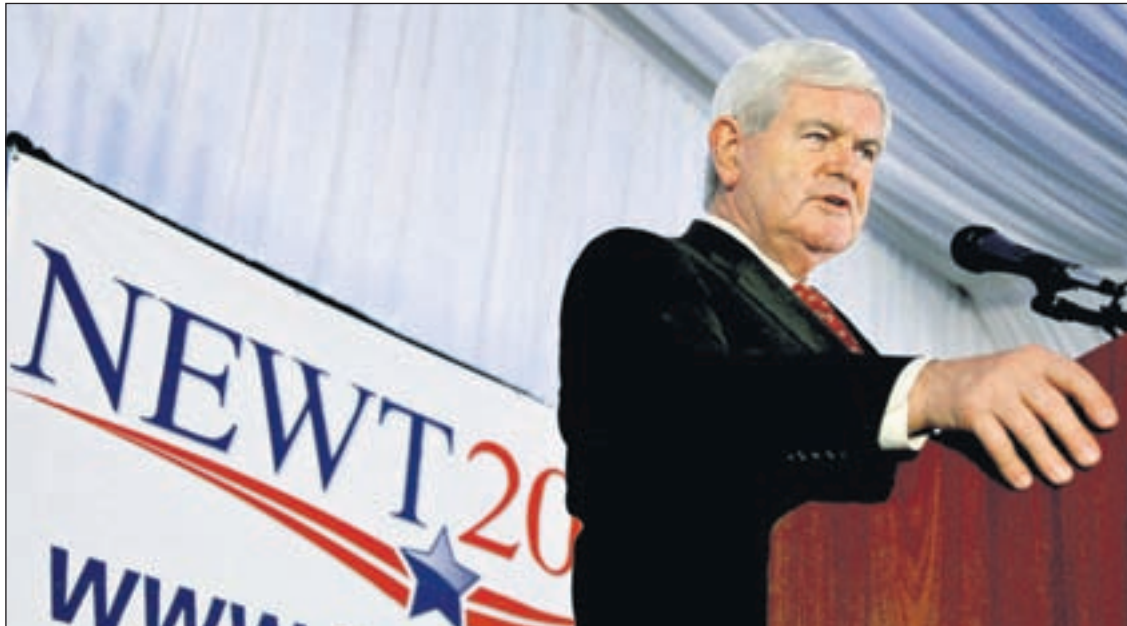
STEVEN R. HURST

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — With businessman Herman Cain gone from the Republican presidential race, Newt Gingrich luxuriated in good polling news over the weekend — two key surveys showing him well ahead of main challenger Mitt Romney in the fast-approaching Iowa caucuses.

Voters in the Midwestern state will vote in local caucus meetings on Jan. 3, the first-in-the-nation contests that choose delegates to the Republican national convention next September in Tampa, Florida, that will formally name President Barack Obama's challenger in 2012.

An Iowa victory would mark a stunning turnaround for Gingrich's once long-shot bid for the nomination. Most of his staff resigned in the summer as the former speaker of the House of Representatives was conducting a lackluster, minimalist campaign that placed him near the bottom in the eight-candidate



Republican presidential candidate and former House Speaker Newt Gingrich speaks at a town hall style event in the Staten Island borough of New York Saturday, Dec. 3, 2011. Gingrich praised GOP presidential rival Herman Cain for bringing optimism and big ideas to the 2012 campaign on Saturday. Polls show that Gingrich's candidacy has surged in recent weeks, with many showing him topping the Republican field.

(AP Photo/Craig Ruttle)

race.

Gingrich began rising, however, as Cain was brought low by allegations of sexual harassment and a 13-year extramarital affair. To the last, Cain, the former CEO of the Godfather's Pizza chain, denied any misconduct but ended his run Saturday, having slid from

a brief period at the top of some polls into single-digit obscurity. The wobbly U.S. economy remains the top issue in the 2012 election, and Obama is deeply vulnerable on that issue because unemployment, while down slightly, remains at a damaging 8.6 percent level and millions of Americans have lost their homes

to mortgage foreclosures in the aftermath of the Great Recession that began in the waning months of George W. Bush's presidency. Polling shows Obama's favorable rating at an all-time low, yet in head-to-head matchups with the leading Republican contenders the incumbent is either leading or in a statistical tie.

As the race narrows, Gingrich appears to have been the biggest beneficiary of Cain's slide. A Des Moines Register poll conducted Nov. 27-30 and released late Saturday found the former House speaker leading in Iowa among likely Republican caucusgoers with 25 percent support, ahead of the libertarian-leaning Texas Rep. Ron Paul at 18 percent and Romney at 16.

A separate NBC News/Marist poll showed Gingrich beating Romney, 26 percent to 18 percent, among likely Republican caucus attendees in Iowa.

While Gingrich has risen in Iowa, Romney, the former Massachusetts governor, still holds a sizable lead in surveys in New Hampshire, where he has a vacation home. The northeastern state holds the first primary election of the campaign season seven days after the Iowa caucuses. And the Obama campaign still appears to view Romney as the likely Republican nominee, given its continuing sharp attacks on what it says is his absence of a moral core politically.

Top Obama campaign adviser David Axelrod said on Sunday that Romney "seems to think that every day is a new day that he can simply change all of his positions, depending on what — who his audience is or what the political circumstance is. And that is not what you want in a president of the United States." He spoke on NBC television's "Meet the Press." Romney's record of changing positions on critical issues to meet the wants of audiences has been a huge drag on his campaign. In the past, when he was campaigning or holding office in Democratic-leaning Massachusetts, he took moderate to liberal stances on issues like abortion and climate change and was responsible for a reform of the Massachusetts health care system that became the model for one that Obama pushed through Congress. □

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McCain: Hispanic vote 'up for grabs'

ANNE FLAHERTY
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Sen. John McCain said Sunday that the potentially powerful Hispanic vote in the upcoming presidential election remains "up for grabs" because neither President Barack Obama nor Republicans have convinced these voters that they are on their side.

The one-time Republican presidential hopeful, whose own 2008 candidacy was shaped in part by immigration, said that large Hispanic populations in his home state of Arizona and elsewhere are listening carefully to what Republican candidates have to say on immigration and could become a "major factor" in 2012.

"I think that the Republican party has to discuss this issue in as humane way as possible," he said. He later added, "the enthusiasm on the part of Hispanics for President Obama is dramatically less than it was in 2008, because he has not

fulfilled his campaign promises either. So I view the Hispanic vote up for grabs."

McCain's comments, on CNN's "State of the Union," is a warning to the Repub-

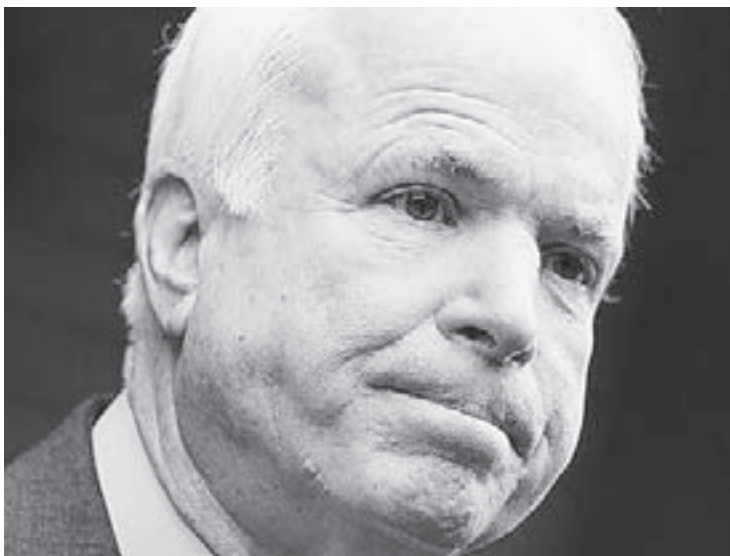
porting any kind of "amnesty" for the some 12 million illegal immigrants estimated to be living in the U.S.

Newt Gingrich, the former speaker of the House of

with longstanding family and community ties in the U.S.; he has since endorsed a South Carolina law that allows police to demand a person's immigration status. McCain said he believes the Hispanic vote could sway Arizona, Colorado and New Mexico. The key, he said, was for Republicans to address immigration in a humane and pragmatic way that every voter

could appreciate. More specifically, McCain said, Republican presidential candidates should find a way to address the status of illegal immigrants already in the country while finding a way to secure the border to deter others from entering the U.S.

"It's a careful balance of addressing this issue, which I think the majority of Hispanics would appreciate. □



Sen. John McCain said Sunday that the potentially powerful Hispanic vote in the upcoming presidential election remains "up for grabs" because neither President Barack Obama nor Republicans have convinced these voters that they are on their side.

lican presidential primary candidates who have mostly embraced a hard-line on immigration, lest they be accused of sup-

Representatives, was most recently attacked by his opponents for saying he would grant legal status to those illegal immigrants

Postal cuts to slow delivery of first-class mail

By HOPE YEN
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Facing bankruptcy, the U.S. Postal Service is pushing ahead with unprecedented cuts to first-class mail next spring that will slow delivery and, for the first time in 40 years, eliminate the chance for stamped letters to arrive the next day.

The estimated \$3 billion in reductions, to be announced in broader detail on Monday, are part of a wide-ranging effort by the cash-strapped Postal Service to quickly trim costs, seeing no immediate help from Congress. The changes would

provide short-term relief, but ultimately could prove counterproductive, pushing more of America's business onto the Internet. They could slow everything from check payments to Netflix's DVDs-by-mail, add costs to mail-order prescription drugs, and threaten the existence of newspapers and time-sensitive magazines delivered by postal carrier to far-flung suburban and rural communities.

That birthday card mailed first-class to Mom also could arrive a day or two late, if people don't plan ahead. "It's a potentially major change, but I don't think



consumers are focused on it and it won't register until the service goes away," said Jim Corridore, analyst with S&P Capital IQ, who tracks the shipping industry. "Over time, to the extent the customer service experience gets worse, it will only increase the shift away from mail to alternatives. There's almost nothing you can't do online that you can do by mail." □

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Critics:

‘Tough’ sheriff botched sex-crime cases

JACQUES BILLEAUD
Associated Press
EL MIRAGE, Arizona (AP) —
 The 13-year-old girl opened the door of her home in this small city on the edge of Phoenix to encounter a man who said that his car had broken down and he needed to use the phone. Once inside, the man pummeled the teen from behind, knocking her unconscious and sexually assaulting her. Seven months before, in an apartment two miles (three kilometers) away, another 13-year-old girl was fondled

in the middle of the night by her mother's live-in boyfriend. She woke up in her room at least twice a week to find him standing over her, claiming to be looking for her mother's cell phone. Both cases were among more than 400 sex-crimes reported to Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio's office during a three-year period ending in 2007 — including dozens of alleged child molestations — that were inadequately investigated and in some instances were not worked at all, according to current and



Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio testifies during the State Bar of Arizona's ongoing disciplinary hearings against former Maricopa County attorney Andrew Thomas and two assistants, at the Arizona Supreme Court in Phoenix. According to some current and former police officers, hundreds of sex-crimes investigations were allegedly mishandled by Arpaio's office.
 (AP Photo/Jack Kurtz, Pool, File)

former police officers familiar with the cases. In El Mirage alone, where Arpaio's office was providing contract police services, officials discovered at least 32 reported child molestations — with victims as young as 2 years old — where the sheriff's office failed to follow through, even though suspects were known in all but six cases. Many of the victims, said a retired El Mirage police official who reviewed the files, were children of illegal immigrants. The botched sex-crimes investigations have served as an embarrassment to a department whose sheriff is the self-described "America's Toughest Sheriff" and a national hero to conservatives for his efforts to crack down on illegal immigration. Arpaio's office refused several requests over a period of months to answer questions about the investigations and declined a public records request for an internal affairs report, citing potential disciplinary actions. Brian Sands, a top sheriff's official who is in charge of the potential discipline of any responsible employees, was later made available to talk about the cases. He declined to say why they weren't investigated. "There are policy violations that have occurred here," Sands said. "It's obvious, but I can't comment on who or what." Sands said officers had subsequently moved to clear up inadequately investigated sex-crimes in El Mirage and elsewhere in the county. □

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Postwar Marines: smaller, less focused on land war

ROBERT BURNS

AP National Security Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — With the Iraq war ending and an Afghanistan exit in sight, the Marine Corps is beginning a historic shift, returning to its roots as a seafaring force that will get smaller, lighter and, it hopes, less bogged down in land wars.

This moment of change happens to coincide with a reorienting of American security priorities to the Asia-Pacific region, where China has been building military muscle during a decade of U.S. preoccupation in the greater Middle East. That suits the Marines, who see the Pacific as a home away from home.

After two turns at combat in Iraq, first as invaders in the 2003 march to Baghdad and later as occupiers of landlocked Anbar province, the Marines left the country in early 2010 to reinforce the fight in southern Afghanistan. Over that stretch the Marines be-



U.S. marines work the scene of car bombing just outside Fallujah, Iraq. With the Iraq war ending and an Afghanistan exit in sight, the Marine Corps is beginning a historic shift — a return to its roots as a seafaring force that will get smaller, lighter and, it hopes, less bogged down in land wars.

(AP Photo/Bilal Fawzi, File)

came what the former Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman, Navy Adm. Mike Mullen, has called their own “worst nightmare” — a second American land army, a static, ground-pounding auxiliary force.

That's scary for the Marines because, for some in Congress, it raises this question: Does a nation drowning in debt really need two armies?

Gen. James F. Amos, the Marine Corps commandant, says that misses the real point.

He argues that the Marines, while willing and able to operate from dug-in positions on land, are uniquely equipped and trained to do much more. They can get to any crisis, on land, at sea or in the air, on a moment's notice.

He is eager to see the Iraq and Afghanistan missions completed so the Marines can return to their traditional role as an expeditionary force.

“We need to get back to our bread and butter,” Amos told Marines on Nov. 23 at Camp Lawton, a U.S. special operations base in Afghanistan's Herat province.

That begins, he said, with moves such as returning to a pattern of continuous rotations of Marines to the Japanese island of Okinawa, home of the 3rd Marine Division formed in the early days of World War II. The rotation of infantry battalions to Okinawa was interrupted by the Iraq war.

□

Church overturns ban on interracial couples

PIKEVILLE, Kentucky (AP)

— The pastor of an eastern Kentucky church whose members had voted to bar mixed-race couples from joining the congregation says that decision has been declared null and void.

Stacy Stepp is pastor of the Gulnare Free Will Baptist Church in Pike County. Stepp told The Associated Press on Sunday that the church body can't pass

new bylaws if they run contrary to local, state or national laws. He said the proposal that was approved in a 9-6 vote last week was discriminatory, therefore it couldn't be adopted. Stepp said about 30 people who attended church services Sunday voted on a new resolution that welcomes “believers into our fellowship regardless of race, creed or color.” □

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Slovene center-left party surprise election victor

ALI ZERDIN

Associated Press

LJUBLJANA, Slovenia (AP)

— A center-left party led by a prominent businessman and mayor nabbed a surprise victory in Slovenian parliamentary elections on Sunday, reflecting mounting concern among voters over the economy in the small EU country.

Positive Slovenia, the party led by the former head of the country's largest retailer and mayor of the capital, Ljubljana, took 28.5 percent of the vote, according to nearly complete results. The favored conservatives were trailing with 26.3 percent.

The leader of the Slovene Democratic Party, former prime minister Janez



Opposition leader Janez Jansa casts his ballot as his wife Urška Bacovnik, left, looks on at a polling station in Velenje, Slovenia, Sunday, Dec. 4, 2011. Slovene people are voting in early parliamentary elections that opinion polls suggest could unseat Prime Minister Borut Pahor's government.

(AP Photo)

Jansa, conceded defeat and congratulated Zoran

Jankovic for his party's win. Positive Slovenia did not win enough votes outright to form a government on its own, setting up a scramble for coalition partners. In winning Slovenia's first snap election since becoming independent from

the former Yugoslavia in 1991, Positive Slovenia will have to tackle the country's mounting debt, unemployment and a looming recession. Jankovic has promised swift reform, including austerity measures. "The results show that Slovenia will go in the right direction," Jankovic said. "It is obvious that the citizens want an efficient state." Serbia-born Jankovic won prominence in Slovenia first as the head of the country's biggest retailer, Merkator, running the company successfully for eight years, before he was removed from the post in 2005 by Jansa over disagreements that Jankovic claimed were politically motivated. The 58-year-old economist has served as the mayor of Ljubljana since 2006. The snap vote was called after the center-left government of Premier Borut Pahor was toppled

over economic troubles and allegations of corruption.

The state electoral commission said the turnout was around 65 percent.

Pahor has said that he has done his best as premier to battle the global economic downturn and the European debt crisis.

Pahor's Social Democrats were third with 10.5 percent of the vote, results showed. Pahor said this was more than he had expected. He offered to meet Jankovic to discuss possible future cooperation.

A newcomer, former minister Gregor Virant, came in fourth, with 8.4 percent, followed by several smaller groups, who won between 4.5 and 7 percent.

Slovenia has been hit hard by the European debt crisis, with public debt swollen to 44 percent of GDP and unemployment at about 12 percent. □

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Dread permeates Congo ahead of election results

RUKMINI CALLIMACHI

Associated Press

KINSHASA, Congo (AP) —

Business owners moved their stock into secure locations on Sunday and families waited to board boats to leave this troubled nation by crossing the mighty river separating it from its neighbor, as early results gave the country's 40-year-old president a nearly insurmountable lead in the recent election. A sense of dread permeated the capital, as citizens awaited the proclamation of results Tuesday from Congo's contested presidential ballot, a vote that was supposed to mark another step toward peace but which instead could be a flashpoint for more



Election volunteers tabulate results at the Fikin compilation center in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo, Sunday, Dec. 4, 2011. Congo's influential clergy say they are concerned about violence and unrest two days before the proclamation of results from a contested presidential election.

(AP Photo/Jerome Delay)

violence.

With half the precincts counted, President Joseph Kabila was leading with 4.9 million votes, or nearly 49 percent.

His opponent Etienne Tshisekedi, who had proclaimed himself president before voting began, was trailing with 3.4 million votes, about 34 percent. □

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Egypt's ElBaradei: Liberals 'decimated' in vote

MARJORIE OLSTER

SARAH EL DEEB

Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — Egypt's top reformist leader said Sunday the liberal youth behind the country's uprising have been "decimated" in parliamentary elections dominated by Islamists and expressed concern about the rise of hard-line religious elements advocating extremist ideas such as banning women from driving. Mohamed ElBaradei, a Nobel Prize laureate and possible presidential candidate, said he hopes moderate Islamists will rein in the extremists and send a reassuring message to the world that Egypt will not go down an ultraconservative religious path.

"The youth feel let down. They don't feel that any of the revolution's goals have been achieved," ElBaradei told The Associated Press in an interview on the same day electoral authorities announced that Islamist parties captured an overwhelming majority of votes in the first round of elections last week. "They got decimated," he said, adding the youth failed to unify and form "one essential critical mass."

The High Election Commission announced that the Islamic fundamentalist Muslim Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice Party garnered 36.6 percent of the 9.7 million valid ballots cast last week for party lists. The Nour Party, representing the more hard-line Salafi Islamists, captured 24.4 percent.

The tallies offer only a partial



Pro-reform leader and Nobel peace laureate Mohamed ElBaradei smiles during an interview with The Associated Press in his home in Giza, on the outskirts of Cairo, Egypt, Sunday, Dec. 4, 2011. Egypt's top reformist leader said the liberal youth behind the country's uprising "got decimated" in parliamentary elections that have been dominated by Islamists and expressed concern about the rise of some hard-line religious elements advocating extremist ideas such as banning women from driving.
(AP Photo/Bernat Armangue)

indication of how the new parliament will look. There are still two more rounds of voting in 18 of the country's 27 provinces over the coming month and runoff elections on Monday and Tuesday to determine almost all of the seats allocated for individuals in the first round. But the grip of the Islamists over the next parliament appears set, particularly considering their popularity in provinces voting in the next rounds.

ElBaradei said he thought the combined strength of the two top-placed Islamist blocs surprised everyone, probably even the winning parties themselves.

"The outcome so far is not

the greatest one," he said, summing up the mood of the country's educated elite as well as average Egyptians as "angst."

The new parliament will be tasked, in theory, with selecting a 100-member panel to draft the new constitution. If Islamist parties dominate, more liberal forces worry the constitution will be greatly influenced by the religious perceptive.

In a move that angered the Islamist groups, the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, which took control of the country after Mubarak's fall in February, has suggested that it will choose 80 of those members. □

Israelis reject Clinton remarks on their democracy

IAN DEITCH

Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israeli Cabinet ministers on Sunday criticized Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton over remarks attributed to her in which she expressed concerns over Israel's democracy.

Clinton made the comments at a closed-door session over the weekend at the Saban Forum, a Mideast policy seminar sponsored by the Brookings Institution think tank.

A senior U.S. official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because Clinton's remarks were considered off the record, confirmed that she expressed concerns about developments in Israel, including the NGO law and recent comments from ultracon-



Kennedy Center Honoree Yo-Yo Ma shares a kiss with Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton at the State Department following a dinner and reception for the Kennedy Center honorees on Saturday, Dec. 3, 2011 in Washington. Israeli Cabinet ministers on Sunday criticized Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton over remarks attributed to her in which she expressed concerns over Israel's democracy.

(AP Photo/Kevin Wolf)

servative politicians. The State Department will not release a transcript of Clinton's remarks.

The Israeli press reported that Clinton criticized a recent wave of legislation in Israel that critics say are aimed at stifling dissent. Israeli media did not provide quotes or a detailed summary.

Recent bills include one that restricts foreign funding for left-wing non-governmental organizations and a draft bill that would make it easier for journalists to be sued.

Israeli critics of the legislation say the bills are an attempt to stifle dissent among dovish groups in the country and muzzle the left-wing against the hawkish government. Supporters say the bills would stop for-

eign interference and demand accountability in the media.

Israeli Finance Minister Yuval Steinitz said Clinton's remarks were "absolutely exaggerated."

Speaking after a Cabinet meeting Sunday, Steinitz said "Israeli democracy is alive, breathing, kicking and liberal."

According to the Israeli media, Clinton was also shocked by the segregation of women on some buses that serve the Ultra Orthodox Jewish community on routes to religious neighborhoods in Israel.

Steinitz agreed that "some things need to be fixed and that the separation of women and attempts to prevent them from participating is unacceptable and must be stopped." □

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Leaders at Americas talks: world economy top worry

IAN JAMES

JORGE RUEDA

Associated Press

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP)

— Leaders from across Latin America and the Caribbean pledged closer ties to safeguard their economies from the world financial crisis as they formed a new bloc on Saturday including every nation in the hemisphere except the U.S. and Canada.

Several presidents stressed during the two-day summit that they hope to ride out turbulent times by boosting local industries and increasing trade within the region. "It seems it's a terminal, structural crisis of capitalism," Bolivian President Evo Morales said in a speech Saturday. "I feel we're meeting at a good moment to debate ... the great unity of the countries of America, without the United States."

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez and some of his closest allies called the new regional bloc a tool for standing up to U.S. influence. But other leaders focused more on economic concerns and on working together to confront issues such as drug trafficking and the effects of climate change.

Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff said that if the nations are to keep thriving they will need to look more to their neighbors.

"The economic, financial crisis should be at the center of our concerns," Rousseff said Friday night. She said Latin America should "realize that to guarantee its current cycle of development despite the international economic turbulence, it means that every politician must be aware that each one needs the



In this photo released by Miraflores Presidential Press Office, Venezuela's President Hugo Chavez, right, talks to Chile's President Sebastian Pinera during the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, CELAC, summit in Caracas, Venezuela, Saturday Dec. 3, 2011.

(AP Photo/Miraflores Presidential Office)

others."

The region has so far weathered the economic woes better than the U.S. or Europe, achieving economic growth of more than 5 percent last year.

Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos said the region has immense potential while "there's a hurricane that's hitting the so-called industrialized economies hard."

He said Colombia's current trade with Brazil, for instance, is minimal and could grow significantly. Chavez read aloud a letter from Chinese President Hu Jintao congratulating the leaders on forming a new 33-nation regional bloc, the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States. Hu pledged to deepen cooperation with the new group.

The U.S. remains the top trading partner of many countries in the region, with

exceptions including Brazil and Chile, where China has recently taken the place of the U.S. as the biggest trading partner.

The leaders formally launched the new bloc, known by its Spanish initials CELAC, by approving a declaration of shared principles as well as a clause dealing with democratic norms. Chavez said leaders had not agreed on whether to make decisions by consensus or by vote, and as a result would reach decisions by consensus for the

time being and take up the matter again later.

Chavez pounded a gavel on his desk as he read out several statements approved by the leaders, including one opposing the U.S. trade embargo against Cuba.

Chilean President Sebastian Pinera, a conservative who took over the new group's rotating presidency, touted it a forum to build regional cooperation in spite of political differences. Pinera said the group would hold its next summit in Santiago

in 2012.

Venezuela's government celebrated the gathering at a Caracas military base with bursts of fireworks that could be heard from the session. Other events included an orchestral performance led by Venezuelan conductor Gustavo Dudamel and a post-summit concert headlined by Puerto Rican hip-hop duo Calle 13.

Both Chavez and Ecuadorian President Rafael Correa said they hope the bloc eventually overshadows the importance of the Washington-based Organization of American States. Unlike the OAS, the new group will have Cuba as a full member and exclude the U.S. and Canada.

"We need a new inter-American system and, more specifically, a new system to guarantee human rights," Correa said Friday, referring to the Washington-based Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, which has received complaints from Ecuadorian newspapers and television channels that accuse his government of trying to silence critics.

Chavez called the OAS "obsolete." Bolivia's Morales strongly criticized the International Monetary Fund, saying "they've just pillaged us and led us to poverty." □

Puerto Rico officials seize cocaine, arrest 5

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP)

— Puerto Rican authorities say they have seized 661 pounds (300 kilograms) of cocaine from a boat intercepted off the U.S. Caribbean island's northwest coast.

Police Superintendent Emilio Diaz Colon says offi-

cers and personnel with the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency intercepted a speedboat off the coastal town of Aguadilla. Agents alleged that five Dominican suspects were transporting 10 bales of white power.

In a Sunday statement, Colon says the material tested positive for cocaine.

The five Dominican men on board were arrested and turned over to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents.

The suspects were not identified. □

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AP Interview:

Haiti leader says Venezuela aid key

IAN JAMES

Associated Press

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP)

— Haitian President Michel Martelly says aid and fuel shipments from Venezuela are having a big impact in the Caribbean country as it attempts to recover from the devastation of its 2010 earthquake.

President Hugo Chavez's government is providing nearly all the fuel that Haiti consumes under preferential terms, including long-term loans and direct shipping that cuts costs. Martelly said power plants installed by Venezuela after the earthquake supply roughly one-fifth of Haiti's electricity and that Venezuela is also providing key financial support for rice farming and other programs.

"The cooperation with Venezuela is the most important in Haiti right now in terms of impact, direct impact," Martelly told The Associated Press in an interview Saturday night after a summit of Latin American and Caribbean leaders.

"We are grateful to President Chavez for helping us from the bottom of his

heart," Martelly said.

Chavez has made helping Haiti a priority since the magnitude-7 earthquake in January 2010 that reduced much of Port-au-Prince to rubble.

His government sent thousands of tons of food aid in the aftermath of the quake, and also set up several camps to temporarily house thousands of displaced Haitians.

Well before the quake, Haiti had already been a major beneficiary of Venezuela's Petrocaribe program, which supplies fuel to Caribbean and Central American countries and allows them to pay part of the bill in goods such as rice and beans rather than cash.

Venezuelan Oil Minister Rafael Ramirez said last week that the program now covers 43 percent of the fuel needs of member nations in Petrocaribe, shipping an average of 95,000 barrels of fuel a day at substantial savings to 16 countries.

The deal has helped Chavez cement relationships with a growing group of allies across in the Caribbean.



Haiti's President Michel Martelly gestures during at bilateral meeting with Chile's President Sebastian Pinera in Caracas, Venezuela, Saturday Dec. 3, 2011. Martelly is in Caracas to attend a summit by the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, CELAC.

In Haiti's case, Petrocaribe also provides money to support social programs, including government projects that are building housing and providing food to poor families, Martelly said during a speech at the

summit on Saturday.

Martelly told the AP that a 30-megawatt power plant and two other 15-megawatt plants installed by Venezuela now "represent a good 20 percent of our total consumption."

"With such rich support, we can — he can — bring some very important change to Haiti," Martelly said.

Venezuela pledged \$1.3 billion in recovery aid following the earthquake, the largest amount among 58 donors, according to the U.N. Office of the Special Envoy for Haiti. It says Venezuela has disbursed \$118 million so far. The U.S. pledged slightly less than Venezuela, \$1.2 billion, but has so far spent more — \$172 million.

Chavez's government also said last year that it was forgiving \$395 million in debt through Petrocaribe. □

Mexico's Calderon notes cartel threat to democracy

MEXICO CITY (AP) — President Felipe Calderon says organized crime is threatening Mexico's democracy through involvement in elections.

Calderon says meddling by drug cartels in elections is "a new fact, a worrisome fact, a threat to everyone."

Calderon urged the country to block such interventions in a 90-minute speech marking his five years in office Sunday. He did not provide specifics on how he plans to stop cartels from manipulating July's national elections.

His sister recently lost the

governor's race in the family's home state of Michoacan in an election fraught with accusations of criminal manipulation. Prosecutors are investigating a taped phone call in which a cartel figure threatened voters and accused a rival of financing a candidate. □

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Russia's governing party claims victory, but support slips

DAVID M. HERSZENHORN

© 2011 New York Times

MOSCOW — Russian voters streamed to the polls on Sunday in a parliamentary election that has shaped up as a referendum on the governing party and Prime Minister Vladimir V. Putin, as he prepares to return to the presidency next year. While there was little question that the party, United Russia, would win the most votes, given its huge structural advantages and weak opposition, the central question was how well it could continue to sell its message of stability to an increasingly weary electorate, now widely empowered by the Internet to gripe about the status quo. With the results still being counted, United Russia declared victory on Sunday evening. "While the 2010-2011 elections in the United Kingdom, Spain and Portugal saw the change of ruling parties, we can now say calmly that United Russia remains the ruling party and I would like to thank our voters for that," Boris Gryzlov, the chairman of the party's

Supreme Council, said.

But two exit polls suggested that the party was on its way to losing far more seats than anticipated, potentially redrawing the political landscape, with voters ex-

"This is an optimal result which reflects the real situation in the country," Putin said, according to Reuters. "Based on this result we can guarantee stable development of our country."



A polar bear, the symbol of the United Russia party, stands before a crowd at a rally by Nashi, the pro-Putin youth organization, near the Kremlin in Moscow, on Dec. 4, 2011. With the results still being counted, United Russia declared victory in the parliamentary election on Sunday evening.

(James Hill/The New York Times)

pressing a louder-than-expected message of frustration. Putin, along with President Dmitry A. Medvedev, made a brief appearance at a subdued meeting at United Russia headquarters.

Medvedev said, according to Reuters, that United Russia, which had previously held a two-thirds supermajority that allowed it to make changes to the constitution without consulting the opposition, was prepared to forge alliances on the issues.

Fatigue with United Russia has been building for years, and the election had been expected to reflect that feeling. And Putin's announcement on Sept. 24 that he intended to swap places with Medvedev next year seemed to annoy voters. The party's support dipped, and the Kremlin had recently acknowledged that United Russia would almost certainly lose the supermajority.

United Russia currently holds 315 seats in the 450-seat Duma, the lower house of Parliament, and the party had said it could lose as many as 75. While Putin is still expected to easily win a separate presidential election in March, a steep loss for his party on Sunday would reflect flagging support for him as well.

Final results were expected on Monday. The party's supporters said that preserving the current system, with Putin in charge, was

the only prudent course.

Galina I. Popkova, 76, said she voted United Russia to avoid political paralysis. "I think we need to allow one side to be stronger, so that we will move forward, even if that movement is slow," she said, though she warned that the government needed to start showing results. "Russians, we are like bears, we are so patient," she said. "But when our patience ends, then we begin to growl." Darya I. Mychkina, 96, held a United Russia poster showing the faces of Putin and Medvedev. "How can you not vote for these beautiful men?" she asked. But a growing minority of discontented voters voiced their dissatisfaction in numerous ways: voting for any party but United Russia, spoiling the ballot by scrawling political messag-

es of heavy-handed politicking, including attempts at bribery, campaign law violations, and other manipulation, and to then quickly distribute the evidence on the web.

There were also several attacks on political websites on Sunday. Golos, the country's only independent election monitor, which was fined about \$1,000 by a Moscow court on Friday for breaking the law by publishing complaints of campaign abuses, had its website disabled by a cyberattack on Sunday morning.

Several other websites also reported crippling attacks, including Ekho Mosky, a popular radio station, and LiveJournal, the country's most popular blogging platform. United Russia reported that one of its websites, established to track



Activists from Nashi, a pro-Putin youth organization, wait in line outside a polling station to vote in the Russian parliamentary elections in Moscow, on Dec. 4, 2011. Russians voted Sunday for representatives in the State Duma, the lower house of Russia's parliament.

(James Hill/The New York Times)

es on them, or boycotting the election. "Today, I am not voting for someone but against someone, because there is no one appealing to vote for," said Sergei Tarakanov, 62, who stood in the snow in a leather coat and porkpie hat outside at a school in central Moscow where he had just cast his ballot. "So I am a protest voter. Today, I am voting against the party of thieves and swindlers."

The election also seemed to mark a portentous new chapter in Russian cyberpolitics. Throughout the campaign, voters used cellphones to record video

campaign violations by its opponents, had also come under assault.

Experts said the most significant campaign violation may be the hardest to prove: United Russia's use of government resources to help its political campaign. United Russia has a huge structural advantage in the voting. Russia elects members of Parliament proportionally by party list. The United Russia lists are all headed by Medvedev, but they also typically include an array of well-known state and local politicians, and even celebrity athletes and performers. □

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The Radisson Concierges Enjoy Great Dinner at the Sunset Grille Restaurant



PALM BEACH – The Radisson concierge team under the guidance of Germaine Wever, Plaza Club Manager, was invited by Gerard Coste Director of Food & Beverage for dinner at the newly refreshed Sunset Grille Restaurant, at the Radisson Aruba Resort Casino & Spa. The award-winning resort has just recently completed its overall property refresh with the re-opening of the Aruba Tower and the Sunset Grille Restaurant. The refresh was part of an extensive USD 26 million renovation project which began in April 2010 and included refurbishing

the 355-room three guest-room towers and key public areas. The refreshed décor in the AAA Four Diamond Sunset Grille Restaurant with a new color scheme and furnishings also embrace new furnishings and seating in the Mira Solo Martini Bar. The hard working Radisson concierges were invited to experience the restaurant first hand, dining over the finest selection of USDA Certified Angus Beef and amazingly fresh seafood, all prepared under the watchful eye of the resort's culinary artists, with chef Kien Fat Lie Kwie, at the helm.



Chef Lie Kwie recently joined the Radisson culinary brigade and found a home at the Sunset Grille Restaurant where he will be collaborating with Executive Chef Hector Espinoza. Born in Surinam, Chef Lie Kwie arrived here at the age of six. Raised on the island, he also studied Culinary Arts here, starting as a cook-helper, almost 3 decades ago. Chef Lie Kwie spent twenty years at the Renaissance Aruba Resort before venturing on his own to open a small local take-out business. But the hotels kept tugging on his heartstrings, and he finally de-



cided to return to his roots, accepting the challenge of work in the kitchen of the famed Sunset Grille Restaurant. Chef Lie Kwie is well-respected on the island for his vast culinary knowledge, his fine taste and superb mas-

tery of international dishes. Nicknamed Chino, he is a terrific addition to the Radisson already stellar line up of culinary specialists. Pictured here Chef Lie Kwie welcoming the concierges to his new home, the Sunset Grille. □

Helping to support kids with a challenge

Super donation for Mi Por from Chaplain Trouwborst



ORANJESTAD - The Mi Por Foundation received a wonderful surprise last Thursday afternoon when army Chaplain Johan Trouwborst donated a whopping AWG. 1.,500.--. The amount was the result of a month's worth of collection money. The chaplain said that the collec-

tion box is always passed around after the Sunday service; the money goes to charities. As Mr. Trouwborst happened to hear about Mi Por, he chose the lucky foundation for the month of November.

Mi Por is a foundation that helps support children with a physical limitation; many of them are struck by muscle diseases which disable them.

Helping them and their families cope with all the hardships that it



entails is one of the goals of Mi Por, which is Papiamentu for I Can.

The foundation provides swimming lessons, which are very beneficial for these children, increased physiotherapy sessions and support at



school, if needed.

Photo shows the moment when chaplain Trouwborst, dressed to the nines in his uniform, hands over the collection money to the board members and swimming instructors of the Mi Por foundation. □

The Blue Lobster Restaurant

Marks Two Weeks since Opening Day



PALM BEACH – The first two weeks since opening the Blue Lobster restaurant flew by swiftly. Chef Sandro and his kitchen and dining room crew were enthusiastically welcomed by food-lovers, rewarding the chef with a full dining room, three out of the first seven nights. Guests hailing from the high rise and low rise resorts flocked to the door to applaud the culinary presentation and taste,

leaving the restaurant with a promise to return.

The locals were not far behind the visitors, also eager to sample the special menu of local specialties for lunch, many of them returning with assorted family members for dinner. Word of mouth, a magical and often elusive marketing phenomenon worked very well on behalf of the Blue Lobster restaurant with first and second



week reviews exchanged on beaches, and repeated around resort swimming pools, resulting in more first-timers, just living to sample what their friends have been raving about. Co-owner German Castano reports his guest respond to the personal touch and warm welcome. The Blue Lobster is after all a small and cozy, family run establishment, allowing guests to feel right at

home while enjoying their delectable lobster dishes, as well as steak, chicken and freshly caught fish. The Blue Lobster featured more than 15 lobster dishes on its menu, listing Lobster Bisque, Lobster Ravioli and Lobster Croquettes, among hot appetizers, Lobster Salad, Lobster Cocktail and Lobster Martini among cold appetizers, and Lobster Thermidor, Lobster Lasagna, Broiled Lobster Tail

in Garlic-Lemon-Herb Butter, Lobster Steak and Shrimp, Lobster Linguini, Lobster and Mushroom Ragout, and Lobster Risotto, as main courses. The unrushed, intimate and relaxing ambiance will prevail, German promises, since the Blue Lobster has no intention to expand. Make your reservations early in the week, so you too can be included, with the in-crowd at the Blue Lobster! □

Aruhiba, The 1 and Only Homemade Aruban Cigar



ORANJESTAD- Benjamin Petrocchi started the newest export product of Aruba, locally produced cigars called "Aruhiba". These cigars are produced and cultivated in Aruba. Petrocchi has always had an interest in the cigar business and has also sold Premium Cuban Cigars, and now he is growing his own tobacco crop. After many attempts and trips to Santo Domingo and Cuba he started his own production and cultivation of Aruhiba Cigars in Aruba. The process took ten years. Petrocchi dedication to the cigars is important for the molding and process of making a perfect cigar which takes a long time. The cigar box is



specially designed for the cigars with the logo "Aruhiba". Petrocchi considers Aruhiba a promotion for Aruba through fine quality cigars.

The company sells International cigars as well. Buy a gift box of Aruhiba Corona with five cigars and you will get 1 FREE cigar of \$35. Located at the Historic Dutch Windmill. Open from Monday to Saturday from 9am till

8:30pm. And open on Sunday from 9am to 1pm. Aruhiba is only available in above mentioned stores.

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Mr. Ron Austin wins \$2.500 at the Aura Casino!



PALM BEACH - Mr. Ron Austin discovered his lucky streak at the Aura Casino at the Occidental Grand while playing on the brand new slot machines! He won a total amount of \$2,500,- in the newly renovated Aura Casino "where players win". Mr. Austin is enjoying a wonderful vacation with his wife and family for a week. They are staying in the Occidental Hotel. The management and staff of the Aura Casino want to wish Mr. Austin congratulations on his great win on the slot machine "Bonus Time." And of course with his Total Amount for the evening that he won \$2,500,- !! The center of Aruba has definitely shifted here at the Aura Casino, which happens to be smack-dab in the middle of all the action on Palm Beach. Come and try your luck, maybe you can be one of Aura Casino's next lucky winners! □



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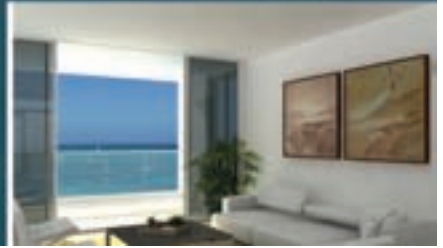


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Toys for Boys now open at Sabana Basora

POS CHIQUITO – Almost one year ago Bryan Gi-etel bought his first remote control helicopter when on vacation in Las Vegas. His imagination was immediately captivated by his new amazing toy, how fun it was to hold, and how easy it was to fly. The decision to open a store in Aruba carrying Toys for Boyz was made right there and then. This weekend Bryan and his wife Lourdes Gi-etel-Geerman welcomed friends and well-wishers at the cute store in Sabana Basora 96, Pos Chiquito. Remote control helicopters, RC cars which run on floors and climb on walls, tanks with gun barrels which move up and down, with realistic firing functions and RC speed boats line the shelves in all sizes, ready to be wrapped as holiday gifts. Bryan reports he has been selling remote control cars and helicopters for about 9 months, and with the opening of the store the business is now official. Toyz for Boyz carries good quality toys at low prices. All RC toys are light weight and can be flown safely indoors and outdoors, they are all great looking, made from crash proof and materials, with a great selection for beginners, and larger, more complicated systems for advanced hobbyists. All models are excellent picks, and will look fantastic under the Christmas tree. Drop by to admire the collection at Toys for Boyz, Gift Shop and Hobby Store, every day after 5pm, or visit the store on Facebook. □



Colts fall to 0-12 with loss to Patriots

New England Patriots tight end Rob Gronkowski (87) heads past Indianapolis Colts linebacker A.J. Edds (52) during the second half of an NFL football game in Foxborough, Mass., Sunday, Dec. 4, 2011.

Associated Press
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Rematch: LSU vs. Bama in BCS title game

By RALPH D. RUSSO
AP College Football Writer
Play it again, LSU and Alabama.

The Crimson Tide edged out Oklahoma State in the final round of voting and will play the top-ranked Tigers in the BCS national championship game on Jan. 9 in New Orleans. It's not exactly a rematch the public was clamoring for—at least outside of Southeastern Conference territory. And it certainly will do nothing to quiet the critics of the Bowl Championship Series or the calls for a college football playoff. But like it or not, the BCS has ensured that the SEC—home to both schools—will run its streak of national championships to six in a row.

The Cowboys made a late surge by beating Oklahoma 44-10 on Saturday night, and closed the gap between themselves and Alabama in the polls. But it was not enough to avoid the first title game rematch in the 14-year history of the BCS.

The Tigers (13-0) beat the Tide 9-6 in overtime on Nov. 5 in Tuscaloosa.

Alabama (11-1) finished second in both the Harris and coaches' polls by a wide enough margin to make up for the fact that Oklahoma State was ahead in the computer ratings.

Continued on Page 18



GRRRRREAT!

Woods ends 2-year drought, wins Chevron

Tiger Woods reacts after winning the Chevron World Challenge golf tournament at Sherwood Country Club, Sunday, Dec. 4, 2011, in Thousand Oaks, Calif.

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LSU vs. Bama

Continued on Page 18

The Cowboys (11-1), champions of the Big 12, will play in the Fiesta Bowl.

As the power-brokers in college football begin to plot how top-tier bowls will be set up in the future, the 2011 season is once more exposing the flaws in the current system.

Oklahoma State and Alabama, two teams with perfectly good arguments to play for a national championship, wound up fighting over one spot, with subjective voters and mysterious computer ratings—the formulas of which are not even publicly known—doing the choosing.

Alabama, with the nation's No. 1 defense, won out and will play for its second BCS crown in three years.

Oklahoma State, with one of the most potent offenses in the country, gets its first BCS appearance as a consolation prize. A rematch between LSU and Alabama in the title game seemed almost a foregone

conclusion heading into conference championship weekend.

But with Alabama idle, Oklahoma State made one last, dramatic statement against the Sooners on Saturday night in Stillwater. And the Cowboys had an impressive resume, beating three teams ranked in the final BCS top 15. Alabama had only one such victory.

So instead of Sunday being a coronation there was drama—and another BCS controversy. Working in Alabama's favor was its dominance throughout the season—all of the Tide's victories have been by at least 16 points—and the fact that no other team has challenged LSU this season. The Tide and Tigers played a hard-hitting defensive slog billed as the Game of the Century. And it was exciting in the way Notre Dame and Army's scoreless tie was exciting in the 1946 version of the Game of the Century. But many fans around the country were ready for something else. Immediately the talk of re-



LSU cornerback Tyrann Mathieu (7) returns a punt for a touchdown against Georgia during the first half of the Southeastern Conference championship NCAA college football game, Saturday, Dec. 3, 2011, in Atlanta.

Associated Press

match started, pro and con. But Oklahoma State was in position to keep it from happening.

The Cowboys were undefeated and second in the BCS standings heading into a Friday night game at Iowa State, a day after Oklahoma State women's basketball coach Kurt Budke and an assistant coach were killed in a plane crash. The Cowboys lost 37-31 in double OT to the so-so Cyclones

(6-6), missing a potential game-winning field goal at the end of regulation by inches. With no other undefeated teams left from the major conferences, Alabama returned to No. 2 and the debate grew ever more heated. On one side, Alabama supporters said it was simple: The system is supposed to match the best two teams, regardless of conference, and the Tide have been one of the two most dominant teams

in the country.

On the other side, the Oklahoma State supporters said the Cowboys accomplished more to get to 11-1 than the Tide, playing a tougher schedule and winning their conference.

Not enough voters were convinced—so it's Tigers-Tide II. Alabama claims 13 national championships overall and is one of the most decorated programs in the land. It's won seven AP titles since the wire service started its poll in 1936. LSU will be seeking its third BCS championship since 2003 at the Superdome—the site of its first two—and second under coach Les Miles. Nick Saban, now the Tide's coach, won that title for LSU in 2003. Miles matched his predecessor in 2007, winning a championship with a team that lost two games. These talented Tigers, led by dynamic defensive back Tyrann Mathieu, have rarely even trailed, and have only been truly tested by the Tide and Heisman Trophy contender Trent Richardson. □



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NFL Roundup

Packers clinch playoff berth with win over Giants

EAST RUTHERFORD, New Jersey (AP) — Aaron Rodgers engineered a last-minute drive to set up a 31-yard field goal by Mason Crosby on the final play of regulation as the Green Bay Packers remained undefeated and clinched a playoff berth with a 38-35 victory over the New York Giants on Sunday.

Rodgers hit three passes of more than 18 yards on the drive in the final 58 seconds as the Super Bowl champion Packers (12-0) won their 18th straight game and handed the Giants (6-6) their fourth straight loss.

New York, which was blown out by New Orleans on Monday night, tied the game on Eli Manning's 2-yard touchdown pass and a 2-point conversion run by D.J. Ware with just under a minute to play.

BRONCOS 35, VIKINGS 32

At Minneapolis, Tim Tebow led yet another late rally, passing for a season-best 202 yards and two third-quarter touchdowns to help Denver win its fifth straight game.

Matt Prater kicked two field goals in the final 93 seconds for the Broncos (7-5), who moved into a first-place tie in the AFC West with a loss by the Oakland Raiders. Christian Ponder set Minnesota's single-game rookie record with 381 yards passing, including a pair of touchdowns to Percy Harvin, but his sideline throw with 1:33 remaining was intercepted by Andre Goodman to set up the winner.

STEELERS 35, BENGALS 7

At Pittsburgh, Ben Roethlisberger passed for two touchdowns and set a team record for career completions against error-prone Cincinnati.

Pittsburgh (9-3) swept the season series from Cincinnati (7-5) for the second straight year behind a 28-point explosion in the second quarter fueled by Roethlisberger, running back Rashard Mendenhall and a 60-yard punt return for a score by Antonio Brown.

Mendenhall and wide



New York Giants defensive end Justin Tuck, left, knocks down Green Bay Packers quarterback Aaron Rodgers during the second quarter of an NFL football game Sunday, Dec. 4, 2011, in East Rutherford, N.J.

receiver Mike Wallace scored two touchdowns for the Steelers, who won for the seventh time in their last eight games.

CARDINALS 19, COWBOYS 13, OT

At Glendale, Arizona, LaRod Stephens-Howling caught a short pass from Kevin Kolb and zipped 52 yards for a touchdown in overtime, snapping Dallas' four-game winning streak. It marked the third time since 2008 that the Cowboys have lost in Arizona in excruciating fashion.

Stephens-Howling dodged a host of would-be Cowboys tacklers to scamper in with the score. Kolb completed 16 of 25 for 247 yards in his first game in five weeks.

Tony Romo was 28 for 42 for 299 yards for the Cowboys.

TEXANS 17, FALCONS 10

At Houston, rookie T.J. Yates threw a touchdown pass in his first NFL start and Arian Foster rushed for 111 yards as Houston overcame another hamstring injury to Andre Johnson.

The Texans (9-3) have won a franchise-record six straight games, a remarkable feat considering they're down to their third-string quarterback and have played the bulk of their streak without their star receiver.

Johnson left in the third

quarter after hurting his left hamstring.

He injured his right hamstring in Week 4 and sat out six games.

49ERS 26, RAMS 0

At San Francisco, Frank Gore ran San Francisco right into the playoffs, be-

coming the 49ers' career rushing leader in a shutout that wrapped up the franchise's first NFC West crown and postseason berth since 2002.

Alex Smith threw second-half touchdowns of 52 and 56 yards to Michael Crab-

tree and Kyle Williams and David Akers kicked four field goals for San Francisco (10-2) as coach Jim Harbaugh joined George Seifert (1989) and Steve Mariucci (1997) as the only rookie coaches in 49ers history to win the division.

PATRIOTS 31, COLTS 24

At Foxborough, Massachusetts, Rob Gronkowski caught two touchdown passes then scored on a lateral as New England withstood a fourth-quarter rally to keep Indianapolis winless.

Trailing 31-3, the Colts rallied with a touchdown run by Donald Brown and two scoring passes from Dan Orlovsky to Pierre Garcon, the last a 40-yarder with 36 seconds to go. But Deion Branch recovered the on-side kick and Tom Brady took a knee on the final play.

DOLPHINS 34, RAIDERS 14

At Miami, Reggie Bush rushed for 100 yards and a touchdown as Miami won for the fourth time in the past five games. □

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Vonn wins Super G, sweeps weekend in Lake Louise

LAKE LOUISE, Alberta (AP)

— Lindsey Vonn won the super-G at Lake Louise on Sunday to complete a sweep of this weekend's World Cup races in her first competition since she announced she was going through a divorce with her husband of four years. The American also won both downhills at the mountain resort west of Calgary. The only other woman to sweep all three World Cup races at Lake Louise was Germany's Katja Seizinger in 1997.

"It's definitely a lot more than I expected considering everything that's going on," Vonn said. "I didn't come into this race expecting this. Now I'm leaving here with a lot of confidence going into my home race, feeling good and ready to compete. "It really couldn't have gone any better."

If Vonn was going through any sort of emotional turmoil, it did not show in her racing here. The 27-year-old from Burnsville, Minnesota, won both downhills by over a second and a half, an eternity in downhill racing.

She completed Sunday's



United States' Lindsey Vonn crests a rise during the women's World Cup super-G ski race Sunday, Dec. 4, 2011, at Lake Louise, Alberta.

Associated Press

super-G in 1 minute, 20.21 seconds, just 0.19 seconds faster than Anna Fenninger of Austria. Julia Mancuso of the U.S. was third for the second straight year in 1:20.92.

"It's nice to see we can get a little closer and have a chance in super-G, but the downhills she skied definitely amazing," Mancuso said of Vonn. "It's inspiring to watch." Vonn admitted feeling nervous prior to Sunday's

race. Listening to music by Lil Wayne and Drake helped her prepare.

"Whenever there's records on the line, it's tough to really stay focused on skiing and that's just what I tried to do," she said. "I tried to calm the nerves, stay cool and listen to a little rap music before."

"Just concentrate on skiing. That's what it takes to get the job done." Vonn, who lives in Vail, Colorado, will head home

to prepare for Wednesday's super-G at Beaver Creek. It was moved there from Val d'Isere, France, where a lack of snow forced skiing officials to reschedule the event.

"I really would love to win at home, so I'm going to look at the video and make sure in Beaver Creek that I clean some turns up and make sure I'm skiing a little more aggressive than I skied today," she said.

The Olympic downhill champion has won 11 World Cup races at Lake Louise. She has 45 wins overall, just one behind Renate Goetschl for third on the all-time list.

"This is far beyond what I expected to do in my career and I feel extremely lucky to do what I love to do every day," Vonn said. "I'm going to try and ski my best and try to win more races and we'll see where that takes me."

She leads the World Cup standings with 422 points. Germany's Viktoria Rebensburg is well back in second with 286.

Vonn lost last season's World Cup title to Germany's Maria Hoefl-Riesch by

just three points. Hoefl-Riesch was fifth Sunday.

"Whenever you experience disappointment or you feel you could have done better, it always motivates you to try harder," Vonn said. "I just really wanted to start this year off well. Last year, I didn't really find my rhythm until later in the season and I just missed out on opportunities. I didn't want to have that feeling today."

Vonn says she spent part of her summer training with men, including current men's World Cup leader Aksel Lund Svindal of Norway.

"I just look at what the men are doing and try to really improve and go in that direction," she said. "I want to ski more like the men do and take that tighter line and really have that strength and be dynamic like they are. It's really tough to do, but I've trained a lot with them this summer."

"That's helped me realize how much faster you can go. When you see people go faster, you try to catch up to them and that's helped me push my skiing to another level." □



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Tiger Woods ends 2-year victory drought

DOUG FERGUSON

AP Golf Writer

THOUSAND OAKS, California (AP) — Two years

after his life and career came crashing down, Tiger Woods is a winner again.

One shot behind with two holes to play, Woods finally looked like the player who dominated golf for so much of his career. He birdied his last two holes Sunday, making a 6-foot putt on the 18th, to win the Chevron World Challenge by one shot over former Masters champion Zach Johnson.

Woods closed with a 3-under 69, sweeping his arm when the final putt dropped, then slamming down his first in a celebration that was a long time coming. It had been 749 days and 26 official tournaments since he last won on Nov. 15, 2009 at the Australian Masters, back when he looked as though he would rule golf as long as he played.

But he crashed his car into a fire hydrant outside his Florida home on Thanksgiving night, and shocking revelations of extramarital

affairs began to emerge, which eventually led to a divorce. Since then, he has changed swing coaches and endured more injuries, missing two majors this summer and missing the cut in another.

Now, however, it looks clear that Woods is on an upward path.

This was his 83rd win worldwide, and the fifth time he has captured the Chevron World Challenge, which he hosts for his foundation. Woods finished at 10-under 278 and donated the \$1.2 million to his foundation.

The win moved him from No. 52 to No. 21 in the world ranking, and likely will send expectations soaring for 2012. Woods will not play again until starting his year in Abu Dhabi at the end of January.

Asked if the emotion was joyous, satisfying or simply relief, Woods smiled and said, "It just feels awesome whatever it is."

He had a worthy adversary in Johnson, who had a one-shot lead going into the final round and trailed for only three holes. Johnson

tied Woods with a birdie on the par-5 13th, made an unlikely par on the 14th by chipping from the bottom of the green, and appeared to seize control by holing a 12-foot birdie putt on the 16th hole.

Johnson thought his birdie putt on the 17th was good all the way until it burned the edge of the cup. Woods, running out of time, drained his birdie putt to force a tie and send the tournament to the 18th.

Woods also was tied on the 18th at Sherwood a year ago and stuffed his approach into 3 feet.

Graeme McDowell holed a 20-foot putt to force a play-off, and beat Woods on the first extra hole.

Johnson, however, missed his birdie putt from 15 feet, leaving the stage to Woods.

He hasn't been in these situations much over the last two years, but this one, finally, had a familiar ending.

Johnson closed with a 71 and still took home \$650,000 for the holidays. Paul Casey, who opened



Tiger Woods poses with his trophy after winning the Chevron World Challenge golf tournament at Sherwood Country Club, Sunday, Dec. 4, 2011, in Thousand Oaks, Calif. Woods closed with clutch birdie putts, including holing a 6-foot birdie putt on the 18th hole for a 3-under 69, to win by one shot over former Masters champion Zach Johnson.

Associated Press

with a 79, had his third straight round in the 60s to finish alone in third at 5 under.

"Tiger can have a long ca-

reer," Casey said when he finished. "We might look back in another 10 years and actually forget about the last couple of years." □

Spain beats Argentina to win fifth Davis Cup title

PAUL LOGOTHETIS

AP Sports Writer

SEVILLE, Spain (AP) — Six months after winning his last tournament, Rafael Nadal overcame a dwindling motivation because of injuries and fatigue to lead Spain to its fifth Davis Cup title and third in four years.

The second-ranked Nadal recovered from a terrible start on his favored surface of clay before holding on to beat Argentina's Juan Martin del Potro 1-6, 6-4, 6-1, 7-6 (0) to give the hosts



Spain's team celebrates after winning the tennis Davis Cup final against Argentina in Seville, Spain, Sunday, Dec. 4, 2011.

Associated Press

a 3-1 series win on Sunday. Nadal's first title since winning his sixth French Open in June followed a run of below-par performances in which he acknowledged feeling less passionate about the sport as another long season took its toll.

Though there were flashes of that poor end-of-season run, Nadal eventually settled into his usual dominant groove on clay, helped by Del Potro's 64 unforced errors. It was the Spaniard's 20th straight victory since debuting in the competition in 2004 with a loss.

"I've never had the chance to secure the winning point of a Davis Cup. In the end it came down to me," said Nadal, who extended his clay record to 16-0 and ensured Argentina remained the only nation to play in four finals without a victory.

Spain players Feliciano Lopez and Fernando Verdasco and captain Albert Costa were among those who enveloped Nadal after he had dropped to the ground in celebration, while Del Potro exited the arena in tears. □

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Assisted suicide:

Canada revisits an old debate

JEREMY HAINSWORTH

Associated Press

VANCOUVER, British Columbia (AP) — Confined to a wheelchair, in constant pain and unable to bathe without help, a 63-year-old grandmother has forced the issue of assisted suicide into Canadian courts for the third time in two decades.

Gloria Taylor has Lou Gehrig's disease, a rapidly progressive, invariably fatal neurological affliction.

"It is my life and my body and it should be my choice as to when and how I die," she said before going to the British Columbia Supreme Court last Thursday to challenge Canada's ban on assisted suicide, a crime carrying a sentence of up to 14 years in prison.

It has been nearly 20 years since another Lou Gehrig's disease sufferer, Sue Rodriguez, gripped Canadian hearts with her court battle for the right to assisted sui-



Gloria Taylor, right, is assisted into British Columbia Supreme Court by her sister Patty Ferguson in Vancouver, B.C. Taylor, who has Lou Gehrig's disease, is seeking the right to a doctor-assisted suicide in a challenge at B.C. Supreme Court. (AP Photo/The Canadian Press, Darryl Dyck)

cide.

She lost her appeal but took her own life with the help of an anonymous doctor in 1994, aged 44.

In 1993, a Saskatchewan

farmer, Robert Latimer, put his quadriplegic daughter Tracey in his pickup truck,

attached an exhaust hose and watched her die. He said the 12-year-old func-

tioned at the level of a three-year-old, living in pain, unable to walk, talk or feed herself.

Convicted of second-degree murder and sentenced to life imprisonment, after numerous appeals Latimer's conviction was upheld and he began serving his sentence in 2001. He was paroled a year ago.

In the latest case now unfolding, Taylor's lead lawyer, civil liberties defender Joe Arvay, argued to the court that assisted suicides were taking place despite the ban, a practice he likened to the illegal "back-alley abortions" of the past. Taylor and her family won't testify, but she sat in the courthouse in her wheelchair. She has told reporters she can't even wash herself unaided or perform basic household chores. □

Nigeria anti-gay marriage bill risks AIDS funding

YINKA IBUKUN

Associated Press

LAGOS, Nigeria (AP) — A bill originally designed to outlaw gay marriage in Nigeria likely has consequences far beyond its initial scope — criminalizing

gay groups and organizations could jeopardize millions of dollars of Western aid geared toward stopping the spread of HIV and AIDS in Africa's most populous nation. Though an oil-rich nation, Nigeria likely

cannot afford to scorn foreign aid in the fight against HIV/AIDS, experts say. Nigeria has the continent's second highest number of people living with the disease, says the United Nations. More than 3 million people are infected with the disease and many do not know their status, according to U.N. estimates.

"There are about 400,000 people on anti-retrovirals in Nigeria at the moment and 95 percent of those are paid for by donor funds," Nigerian public health physician and health blogger Chikwe Ihekweazu told The Associated Press. □

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Paris to launch electric car sharing program

JAMEY KEATEN
Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — Paris, in its latest bid to be an innovator of the City of Tomorrow, is launching an electric car-sharing program to cut air and noise pollution on the city's medieval cobblestone streets and beyond. Autolib', a project built on the success of the city's bike-rental scheme, makes its debut Monday and officials want the self-service e-cars to be as much a part of Paris life as the Eiffel Tower or Notre Dame Cathedral.

While many world cities have been developing greener alternatives to carbon-emitting vehicles, Paris says its program is the biggest of its kind: 250 vehicles hit the road on Monday, 2,000 are expected by next summer and 3,000 are planned within the next two years. The four-seat compact Bluecar — even though it's really gray — is a collaboration of Italian car designer Pininfarina and French conglomer-

ate Groupe Bolloré, which hopes to showcase its Lithium Metal Polymer battery that powers the car.

Prospective users will need a valid ID, driver's license and credit card before signing up online or by a videoconference with an customer service representative at one of 40 special glassed-in shelters in Paris and dozens of suburban towns also taking part. Standard subscriptions cost €10 (\$13.5) a day, €15 (\$20) a week, and €144 (\$195) a year. Beyond that, the hourly fees run from €4 to €9 based on the rental plan — and users' cards can be charged in case of damage to the vehicles.

To get going, users swipe a magnetized card against a driver's-side window to open the door, and a key tethered to the steering column starts the car. It comes with bells and whistles, literally — a button on the steering column lever produces a repetitive beep to alert Paris' many pedestrians that the silent car is

on its way. "The city's first interest is fighting air pollution, these cars not only don't emit carbon dioxide but localized exhaust fumes either — and they don't make noise: (Studies show) the No. 1 nuisance in the city is noise," said Sylvain Marty, who heads the multi-city Autolib' partnership led by Paris and private-sector affiliates.

Autolib' also tackles what automotive analysts have long said is a big hurdle for the development of electric cars: a lack of infrastructure — not enough charging stations. For €180 a year, owners of electric cars can use the spots to juice up their own vehicles at the Autolib' charging stations.

For the last six months, crews with jackhammers have been outfitting sidewalks with some of the 1,200 charging stations and marking off parking spaces that will be reserved exclusively for Autolib' users.

Those promoting the vehicle say it can run for 250



In this photo taken Friday, Dec. 2, 2011, a member of the media looks at a parking station for the Autolib' electric car-share scheme on a street in Paris.

Associated Press

kilometers (150 miles) on a single charge.

"I personally tried driving it more than four hours, in traffic, with the heat on full blast and I wasn't able to get it below 70 percent charge," said Marty. "For city use, that's more than enough." Some 2,000 people have already registered for Autolib' accounts, and curious city officials from places like Guangzhou, China, or Rio

de Janeiro have traveled to Paris to check it out, Marty said. As is often France's wont, detractors and skeptics abound.

The country's main Green party movement says the electric cars will drain more energy from France's nuclear plants, which they oppose; will require battery disposal; and will ultimately encourage people to drive more. □

SAP to pay \$3.4B for SuccessFactors

JORDAN ROBERTSON
AP Technology Writer

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — SAP said Saturday it is paying \$3.4 billion to acquire SuccessFactors, a software company specializing in human resources tasks. It is the latest move in the escalating rivalry between SAP and Oracle Corp., and underscores the increased interest in technology companies that deliver software over the Internet, or in the so-called "cloud."

The deal calls for subsidiary SAP America Inc. to pay \$40 per share in cash for SuccessFactors. That is a 52 percent premium over SuccessFactors' closing stock price of \$26.25 on Friday. The deal is expected to close in the first quarter of 2012. SAP AG is one of the world's biggest business software makers. The German company's specialty is business applications, such as those used for payroll and managing relationships with customers

and suppliers. SuccessFactors, based in San Mateo, California, is a big maker of cloud-based human resources applications. The company focuses on applications for managing relationships with employees, such as organizing and developing performance reviews and bonuses. The company says it has more than 3,500 customers. It lost \$12.5 million on \$205.9 million in revenue last year.

"The cloud is a core of SAP's future growth, and the combination of SuccessFactors' leadership team and technology with SAP will create a cloud powerhouse," Bill McDermott, an SAP co-CEO, said in a statement.

The deal is part of the growing rivalry between SAP and Oracle. Oracle's push into SAP's turf of business applications has been a multibillion-dollar affair. Oracle's boisterous CEO Larry Ellison has pursued big-ticket acquisitions that

have made his database software company a major player, behind SAP, in many different realms of the business software world. SAP is the dominant maker of business applications. The feud has gotten personal. Oracle won a \$1.3 billion jury verdict against SAP last year over the widespread theft by a now-shuttered SAP subsidiary of documents from password-protected Oracle customer websites.

Oracle alleged the information was used to steal business.

A judge threw out the award, calling it "grossly excessive" and setting the stage for a retrial.

Oracle landed a publicity jackpot from the trial. Ellison used it to repeatedly shame SAP publicly. SAP admitted the theft and agreed to pay \$20 million to settle criminal charges filed by the Department of Justice over the former subsidiary's practices. □

US online sales a record \$6B in week after holiday

NEW YORK (AP) — U.S. shoppers are still spending heavily online after a record-busting "Cyber Monday."

Research firm comScore says shoppers spent nearly \$6 billion online on Monday through Friday last week — a record.

On Cyber Monday itself, sales reached \$1.25 billion, the biggest online shopping day in history. Online sales on Tuesday and Wednesday also broke \$1 billion.

Cyber Monday sales topped \$1 billion for the first time last year.

ComScore says online sales are up 15 percent to \$18.7 billion in November and the first two days of December, compared with the same period last year.

Free shipping appears to be a big draw, applying to 63 percent of sales, up from 52 percent a year ago.

ComScore's spending figures exclude travel, auctions and large corporate purchases.

Ask the people who invest billions for a living to name their favorite picks for 2012 and you'll get choices worthy of a holiday party: Brazilian stocks, U.S. junk bonds and government debt from Colombia. Ask them what they dislike and they'll name one of the top-performing investments this year: U.S. government

bonds.

Investors can name a long list of reasons to avoid Treasuries. They pay next to nothing and are bound to plunge in value whenever interest rates begin climbing from their historically low levels. It seems nobody likes Treasuries, yet everybody keeps buying them anyway. "Our least favorite asset is Treasuries," said Christine Hurtsellers, chief investment officer for fixed-income at ING Investment Manage-

ment during a recent press briefing. "We still have a lot, but it's hard to make the argument for them."

It's a tricky problem for bond-fund managers at a time when everyday Americans are trusting them with more of their savings. Among investors, there's a solid belief that Treasury prices must fall and push interest rates up at some point. But those who have bet on a Treasury market collapse this year got burned. □



Shoppers wait for the lights to change on a crossing beside Oxford Street, in London, which was closed to traffic for part of the day due to the volume of Christmas shoppers Sunday, Dec. 4, 2011.

(AP Photo/Matt Dunham)

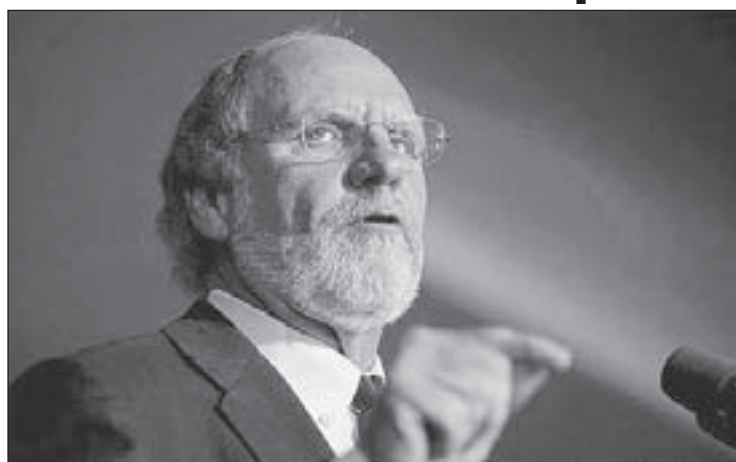
Shocks from MF Global collapse felt on farms

STEVE KARNOWSKI

Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — The

shock waves from the collapse of commodities trading firm MF Global Inc. are hitting hard across rural America, where farmers, ranchers and agricultural business owners are nervously waiting to learn how much money they've lost. Many of the farmers who traded with MF Global, which is being investigated over what federal regulators say is an estimated \$1.2 billion that may be missing from customer accounts, used the futures markets to reduce the risks of volatile prices. Locking in prices through the futures market — something farmers have been doing for a century — allows them to plan ahead while knowing what their



The shock waves from the collapse of commodities trading firm MF Global Inc. are hitting hard across rural America, where farmers, ranchers and agricultural business owners are nervously waiting to learn how much money they've lost.

costs will be.

Mike Mouw, co-owner of Mouw's Feed and Grain Inc. in the southwestern Minnesota town of Leota, said his business relies on the futures markets both when it buys grain from farmers and when it sells

feed to hog producers. That makes it possible for the company to plan two or three years ahead. Now, though, Mouw estimates he's out about \$250,000. "I'm praying that I get it back," he said.

Farmers, ranchers and ru-

ral businesses such as grain elevators and feed mills were among the hardest hit when they were cut off from the cash in their hedging accounts at MF Global, which sought bankruptcy protection in October after making a disastrous bet on European government debt.

The number of people harmed and the extent of their losses isn't clear yet.

"This thing should not be taken lightly by anybody," Mouw said. "This has a far greater trickle-down than people realize."

Federal regulators are investigating whether MF Global, as its financial condition worsened, tapped client funds that were supposed to be kept safe in strictly segregated accounts. □

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Italian government approves austerity measures

COLLEEN BARRY
Associated Press

MILAN (AP) — Premier Mario Monti said Sunday his government of technocrats has approved a package of austerity and growth measures worth €30 billion (\$40.53 billion) to "reawaken" the Italian economy and help save the euro common currency from collapse.

The measures include immediate cuts to the costs of maintaining Italy's bulky political class as well as significant measures to fight tax evasion, Monti told a news conference following a three-hour Cabinet meeting.

As part of the political cost cuts, Monti said he would forego his salaries as premier and finance minister — a move he said was a personal decision and not meant as an example for other ministers in the government, which was formed 2 1/2 weeks ago after Premier Silvio Berlusconi's resignation under market and political pressure.

The package also includes measures to spur growth and competition, while aiming to stamp out rampant nepotism. But it also raises the retirement age and the number of years of service to qualify for a full pension, steps strongly opposed by unions, and imposes new taxes on Italians' private wealth, including their homes, boats and luxury cars, measures that conservatives have protested.

"We gave a lot of weight to fairness, we had to distribute some of the sacrifices but we took a lot of care to distribute them in a fair way," Monti said.

Monti will outline the measures on Monday in addresses to both houses of Parliament, which must approve them. Monti said he will appeal to lawmakers' sense of responsibility.

The Berlusconi government stepped down due to its failure to get tough measures through a fractious Parliament, which remains intact, meaning fault lines could easily reopen.

"A lot depends on how well

Italian Premier Mario Monti listens to a journalist's question during a press conference in Rome, Sunday, Dec. 4, 2011. Italy's new government has approved emergency austerity and growth measures aimed at helping save the euro from collapse. Premier Mario Monti announced approval of the measures Sunday evening following a three-hour Cabinet meeting. He says the goal is to "reawaken" the Italian economy.

(AP Photo/Pier Paolo Cito)

or not we explain to the citizens what we are trying to do," Monti said.

The premier, an economist who once was an EU commissioner, has been under extreme pressure to come up with speedy and credible measures that will persuade markets to stop betting against the common currency. Italian borrowing costs have spiked, which could spell disaster if Italy is unable to keep up on payments to service its enormous debt of €1.9 trillion (\$2.57 trillion), or 120 percent of its GDP.

Unlike Greece, Portugal and Ireland, which got bailouts after their borrowing rates skyrocketed, the eurozone's third-largest



economy is considered to be too big to bail out. An Italian default would be disastrous for the 17-member eurozone and reverberate throughout the global

economy.

Deputy Economic Minister Vittorio Grilli said the measures passed will ensure that Italy's budget will be balanced by 2013 through

a 2 percent increase in value-added tax from the second half of 2012. Berlusconi's now-defunct government already raised the value-added tax from 20 percent to 21 percent as part of earlier measures.

In addition, the government adopted austerity measures worth €20 billion and €10 billion in measures aimed at boosting anemic Italian growth. They include pension reform, local government spending cuts, the reestablishment of a tax on a first house that was annulled by Berlusconi and new taxes on boats over 10 meters (30 feet) in length and on luxury cars, Grilli said. At the same time, the measures will reduce the tax on the cost of employment, give fiscal breaks to companies that invest to grow their businesses and increase investments in local public transport.

Monti denied an impression that the measures mostly comprised new taxes.

"There are certainly taxes, we know that in Italy it is easier to reduce the deficit through new taxes than through cutting costs," Monti said. □

Economic reports for the week ahead

ECONOMIC REPORTS

Data will include the ISM nonmanufacturing index for November and factory orders for October (Monday); consumer credit for October (Wednesday); weekly jobless claims and wholesale trade inventories for October (Thursday); the trade deficit for October and the Thomson Reuters/University of Michigan consumer sentiment index for December (Friday).

CORPORATE EARNINGS

Companies reporting results will include Dollar General (Monday); Toll Brothers (Tuesday); and Costco Wholesale and Smithfield Foods (Thursday).

IN THE UNITED STATES

On Tuesday, the Senate banking committee will

conduct a hearing about the oversight of the Wall Street Reform Act, the

tion aimed at preventing members of Congress from making investments



A woman shops at Costco in Minneapolis. Companies reporting results this week will include Dollar General (Monday); Toll Brothers (Tuesday); and Costco Wholesale and Smithfield Foods (Thursday).

House Financial Services Committee will conduct a hearing about legisla-

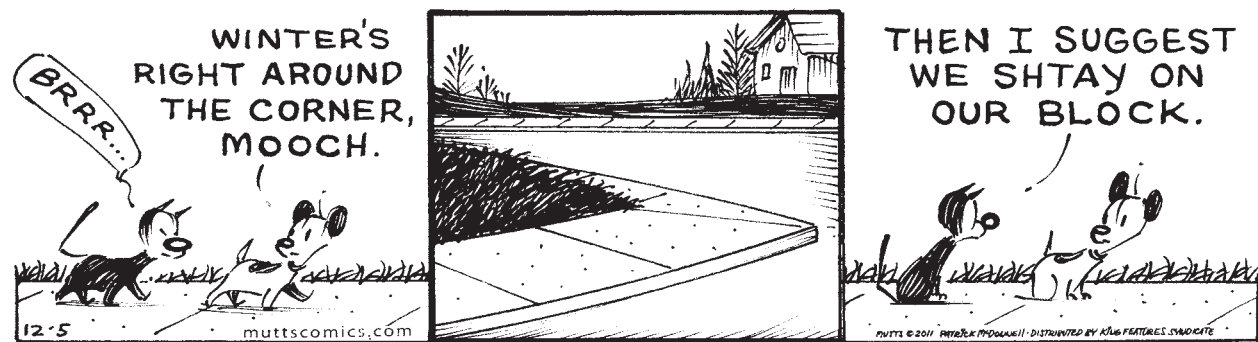
based on insider knowledge, and a Senate judiciary subcommittee

will conduct a hearing about the merger of Express Scripts and Medco. On Wednesday, a Senate banking subcommittee will conduct a hearing about supervision of large financial institutions. On Thursday, the House Agriculture Committee will conduct a hearing about the MF Global bankruptcy.

IN EUROPE

On Monday, Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany and President Nicolas Sarkozy of France will meet in Paris to discuss the eurozone crisis. On Thursday, the European Central Bank and the Bank of England will issue decisions about interest rates. On Friday, European leaders will meet to discuss fiscal integration of the eurozone and potential changes to treaties. □

Mutts



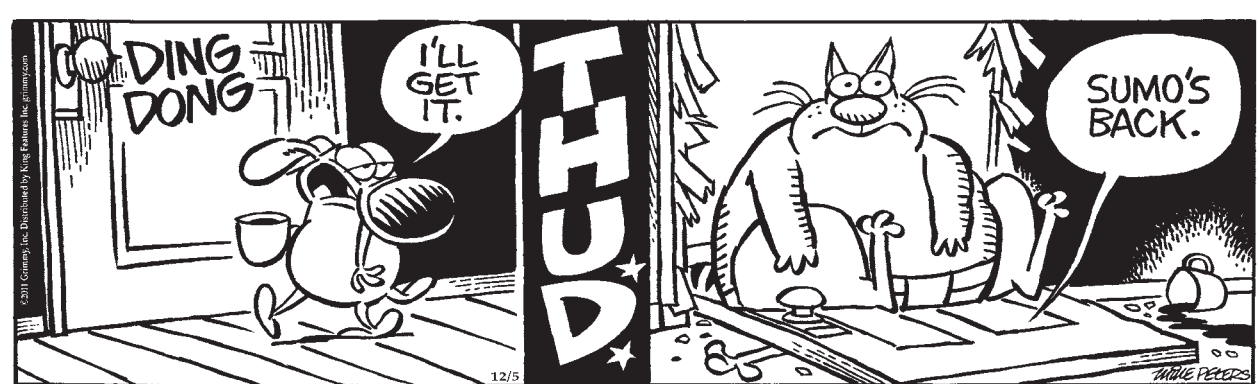
6 Chix



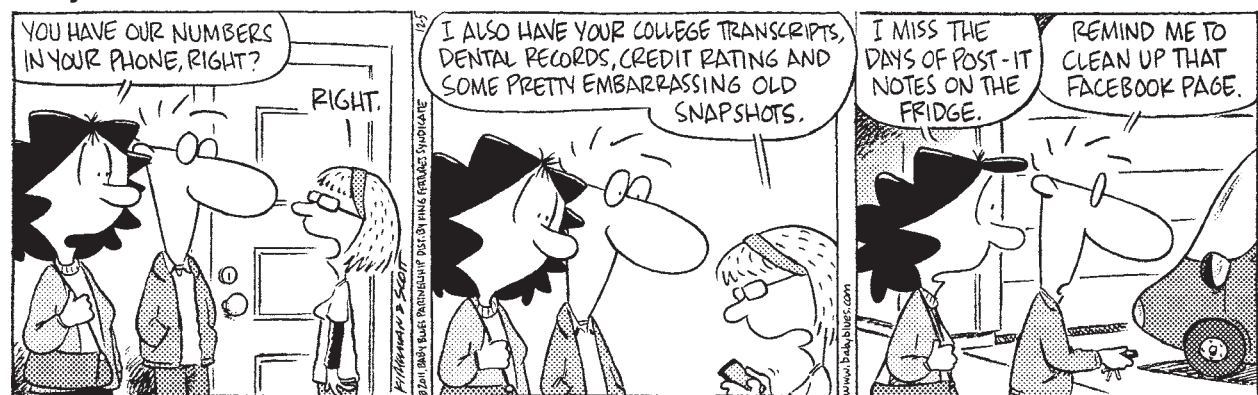
Blondie



Mother Goose & Grimm



Baby Blues



Zits



Conceptis Sudoku

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2 | | 3 | 1 | | | | 9 |
| 3 | | 6 | 9 | 2 | | | | |
| | 4 | 1 | | | | | | |
| 5 | 1 | | | | 3 | | | |
| 8 | 3 | | | | | | 2 | 1 |
| | | | 7 | | | | 8 | 4 |
| | | | | 6 | 2 | 4 | | 5 |
| 6 | | | | 4 | 9 | | 3 | |

Difficulty Level ★

12/05

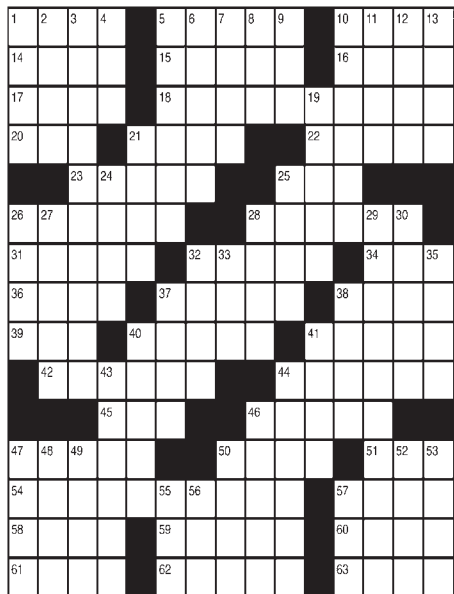
Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

Saturday's puzzle answer

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | 7 | 8 | 2 | 1 | 5 | 6 | 9 | 4 |
| 1 | 5 | 9 | 7 | 6 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 8 |
| 4 | 6 | 2 | 8 | 3 | 9 | 7 | 1 | 5 |
| 7 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 8 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 |
| 8 | 9 | 6 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 7 | 1 |
| 2 | 3 | 1 | 9 | 5 | 7 | 4 | 8 | 6 |
| 5 | 8 | 7 | 3 | 9 | 6 | 1 | 4 | 2 |
| 6 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 5 | 3 |
| 9 | 1 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 2 | 8 | 6 | 7 |

ACROSS

- 1 GPS screen diagrams
- 5 TV's "Green"
- 10 Sage or thyme
- 14 Canyon sound
- 15 __ suspect; likely offender
- 16 Opera solo
- 17 Not spicy
- 18 Candy cane flavor
- 20 Lofty poem
- 21 Barn dinner
- 22 Pig comments
- 23 One known as "Uncle Miltie"
- 25 Buddy
- 26 Spade
- 28 Living room
- 31 B-flat and D-sharp, e.g.
- 32 "Beowulf" and "Paradise Lost"
- 34 Vigor
- 36 Come __; find
- 37 Male bee
- 38 River dam
- 39 Ruby or jade
- 40 Finger or toe
- 41 Freight
- 42 Go-getter
- 44 Trip to the bank or store, e.g.
- 45 Elvis hit: " __ You Lonesome Tonight?"
- 46 Impulsive
- 47 Strainer
- 50 Attire
- 51 "Son __ gun!"
- 54 Ethiopia's capital
- 57 Wreck
- 58 Relinquish
- 59 Become soft & ready for eating
- 60 Capital of Norway
- 61 Kyser and Panabaker
- 62 Assumed a praying posture
- 63 Adolescent



Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews

12/5/11

Saturday's Puzzle Solved

| | | | |
|-----------|-----------|-------|------|
| AUK | | ACHES | CAST |
| ITEM | BEACH | RUTH | |
| MANE | BATHE | EDIE | |
| HORSESHOE | DIRE | | |
| ROSE | PHI | | |
| MARIOS | AVIATING | | |
| ADULT | TRESS | NOR | |
| COPY | SWISH | FLOE | |
| ARE | YEAST | ERASE | |
| ONEHORSE | FLOWED | | |
| ONE | TOLL | | |
| ILKA | NECESSITY | | |
| SEAR | AVERT | CHOP | |
| NATS | DENSE | SAKE | |
| TREE | ENTER | NEW | |

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12/5/11

DOWN

- 1 Short note
- 2 __ reflux; digestion woe
- 3 Blood bank
- 4 Layer of turf
- 5 Horrify
- 6 Largest Greek island
- 7 Tears
- 8 Napoleon or Hirohito: abbr.
- 9 Behold
- 10 Skater Dorothy
- 11 Moran or Gray
- 12 Skating oval
- 13 Baseball sticks
- 19 Laughs loudly
- 21 Miners' finds
- 24 Fair; balanced
- 25 Fast horse gait
- 26 Comfy
- 27 Was optimistic
- 28 Half-quart
- 29 The Met, e.g.
- 30 Be in power
- 32 Consequently
- 33 Taro root food
- 35 Nudge
- 37 U. S. coin

- 38 International conflicts
- 40 Challenges
- 41 Grumpy person
- 43 National sea forces
- 44 Wayward
- 46 Biblical tower
- 47 In the __; abed
- 48 Notion
- 49 Whirlpool
- 50 Stare
- 53 Shortly
- 55 Noah's boat
- 56 Canister
- 57 Go bad



Lucy Hale, left, and Ashley Benson ice skate at ABC Family's "25 Days of Christmas" Winter Wonderland party at Rockefeller Center, in New York, Sunday Dec. 4, 2011.
(AP Photo/Charles Sykes)

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mobile: (297)562-0712 or 731-2012
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SAN NICOLAAS:
Botica Aloe Tel: 584-4606

Police

| | |
|-------------|----------|
| Police | 581-1100 |
| Oranjestad | 582-4000 |
| Noord | 587-0009 |
| Sta. Cruz | 585-4710 |
| Savaneta | 584-7000 |
| San Nicolas | 584-5000 |

Emergency Numbers

| | |
|----------------|----------|
| Emergency | 911 |
| Police | 100 |
| Fire Dept. | 115 |
| Fire Dept. II | 582-1108 |
| Police Tipline | 11141 |
| Hospital | 527-4000 |

Oranjestad

| | |
|-----------|----------|
| Ambulance | 582-1234 |
| Police | 582-4000 |

San Nicolas

| | |
|-----------------|----------|
| Ambulance | 584-5050 |
| Police station | 584-5000 |
| BGD San Nicolas | 584-1606 |
| Valero Security | 584-1720 |

Services

| | |
|------------------|----------|
| Information | 118 |
| Setar | 582-5151 |
| Taxi | 582-2116 |
| Taxi- Tas | 587-5900 |
| Profesional Taxi | 588-0035 |
| Taxi D.T.S. | 587-2300 |
| Service Aruba | 583-3232 |

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|-------------------|---------------|
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| American Airlines | Tel: 582-2700 |
| Avianca | Tel: 588-0059 |
| Dutch Antilles | Tel: 588-1900 |
| Insel Air | Tel: 588-9314 |
| Jet Blue | Tel: 588-2244 |
| Spirit Airlines | Tel: 582-7117 |
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SETH BORENSTEIN

WASHINGTON (AP) — Last year's BP oil spill probably won't push the troubled bluefin tuna population

Of all the potential damage from the 172-million-gallon

That's because about one-fifth of the spawning habitat where the Gulf's baby tuna were living was coated with oil, according to satellite records. Tuna less than a year old are most vulnerable to pollution.

An analysis by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, using two different projections from computer models, says that at most, such a spill probably would result in a 4 percent reduction in future

A summit that begins Monday in Houston will examine the Gulf's health, including the government's restoration plans and the tuna's fate.

The agency's analysis, which was mentioned in two pages of a 114-page government update on

Instead of 20 percent of baby tuna being harmed, more recent analysis yet to be published said it should be 11 percent or maybe even 5 percent, he said. Those figures should be reduced even more for the overall future population of tuna, down nearer to 2 percent.

Porch said it's unlikely that the effect on tuna stock would hit 4 percent and "it is not an additional major source of stress" on the overall population of the bluefin tuna in the Gulf. □

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Charlie Sheen's ex-wife arrested in Aspen

ASPEN, Colorado (AP) — Police in Aspen say Charlie Sheen's ex-wife, Brooke Mueller, has been arrested on suspicion of third-degree assault and cocaine possession with intent to distribute.

Authorities say officers arrested Mueller early Saturday at a nightclub after a woman reported being assaulted by her.

Mueller posted \$11,000 bond and was released from custody. She's scheduled in court Dec. 19. Aspen police spokeswoman Blair Weyer says additional details are not immediately available.

Her attorney, Yale Galanter, had no comment.

Sheen and Mueller divorced earlier this year, citing Christmas Day 2009 as



This undated photo provided by the Aspen Police Department shows Brooke Mueller. Associated Press

the day of their breakup. Charlie Sheen was arrested in Aspen on that day on suspicion of assaulting Mueller. He completed his probation in that case last November. □

Records show Christie Brinkley owes \$531k in back taxes

NEW YORK (AP) — Records show supermodel Christie Brinkley owes \$531,000 in back taxes, and the IRS has filed a lien against her.

The Daily News of New York reports that the tax lien was filed Nov. 21 on a mansion in Bridgehampton on New York's Long Island, where

she lives.

A spokeswoman for Brinkley says the star was surprised to hear the lien had been filed.

Spokeswoman Claire Mercuri says: "Christie Brinkley ... has instructed her team to resolve the matter immediately." □

Tom Cruise visits India's iconic Taj Mahal

NEW DELHI (AP) — Hollywood star Tom Cruise says his visit to India this week follows a lifelong desire to see the country.

He said while touring the iconic, white-marble Taj Mahal mausoleum in Agra that he is "very excited" about being in the country for a fan screening of his latest action-thriller, "Mission Impossible: Ghost Protocol," days ahead of its world premiere on Wednesday.

Cruise joins Bollywood star Anil Kapoor for the red-carpet screening Sunday in Mumbai. The film sees Cruise reprise his role as secret agent Ethan Hunt, while Kapoor plays an Indian business tycoon.

Cruise told Press Trust of India on Saturday, "I wanted

to come to India my whole life, so I am very excited." □



Hollywood star Tom Cruise poses in front of the landmark Taj Mahal in Agra, India, Saturday, Dec. 3, 2011. Cruise is in the country on a promotional tour of his new film "Mission: Impossible - Ghost Protocol". Associated Press



In this July 21, 2011 photo, from left, Robert Pattinson, Kristen Stewart and Taylor Lautner pose at an event held to promote the film "The Twilight Saga: Breaking the Dawn Part 1" at the Comic-Con International 2011 convention July 21, 2011, in San Diego.

Associated Press

'Twilight' stays bright but Hollywood snoozes

DAVID GERMAIN

AP Movie Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The latest "Twilight" movie cast the longest shadow with \$16.9 million for a third-straight No. 1 finish during one of the year's slowest weekends at the box office. Business was dismal, with box-office tracker Hollywood.com estimating Sunday that domestic revenues totaled just \$82 million. That puts it barely ahead of Hollywood's worst haul of the year, when revenues were \$81.5 million over the second weekend in September. Once studios release final numbers Monday, this past weekend could come in as the worst of the year if revenues finish even lower. The first weekend of December often presents a lull in between big Thanksgiving holiday releases and the onslaught of year-end blockbusters that arrive a bit later. But this big a slowdown is surprising given that there's quality stuff out there among the top-10 films, particularly family fare such as "The Muppets," "Hugo" and "Arthur Christmas."

Hollywood executives usu-

ally blame bad weekends on a weak crop of movies. "It's tough to blame it on the product when the product is pretty good and the films are solid," said Hollywood.com analyst Paul Dergarabedian. "While the post-Thanksgiving weekend is typically slow, it's not usually this slow."

The dreary weekend comes after a relatively quiet Thanksgiving holiday at movie theaters, despite analysts' predictions of potential holiday records because of a great lineup of films. But more fans might be thinking twice about heading out to theaters given the new entertainment options they have with Apple's iPad, Amazon's Kindle products and other gadgets, along with their big-screen home setups for movies and television. Or it could be that Hollywood has temporarily neglected its mainstay audience of young males. Dergarabedian said there's little out there now for guys looking for thrills and laughs.

That will change in the coming weeks as Jonah Hill's comedy "The Sitter" opens Friday, followed by

a rush of action tales: Tom Cruise's "Mission: Impossible — Ghost Protocol," Robert Downey Jr.'s "Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows" and Steven Spielberg's "The Adventures of Tintin."

Women and families continue to dominate the scanty business at theaters now. Summit Entertainment's female-driven blockbuster "The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn — Part 1" raised its domestic haul to \$247.3 million. "Breaking Dawn" added \$40.2 million overseas, taking it to a tally of \$341 million internationally and \$588.3 million worldwide. Coming in second again was Disney's "The Muppets" with \$11.2 million, lifting the family film's domestic total to \$56.1 million. Despite good reviews, though, "The Muppets" audience was off more sharply than any other top-10 movie compared to Thanksgiving weekend. Paramount's family adventure "Hugo," an acclaimed saga directed by Martin Scorsese, finished third with \$7.6 million, raising its domestic take to \$25.2 million. □

Clinton flies home to fete Kennedy Center honorees

BRETT ZONGKER

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP)—Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton joined in celebrating the top artists receiving the Kennedy Center Honors on Sunday while home for less than 36 hours between diplomatic travels.

Between her historic visit to Myanmar and a trip to Germany to discuss Afghanistan's future, Clinton hosted a dinner Saturday for some big names from Broadway, jazz, pop, classical music and Hollywood. On Sunday, Barbara Cook, Neil Diamond, Yo-Yo Ma, Sonny Rollins and Meryl Streep will also be saluted by President Barack Obama and their fellow artists with tribute performances at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

"Everybody likes him," Obama said of Yo Yo Ma. "You've got to give me some tips."

Obama noted that Yo Yo Ma has appeared on Sesame Street and said, "I thought about asking him to go talk to Congress."

After visiting the isolated Southeast Asian country also known as Burma, Clinton

said such U.S. artists have worldwide influence by using their freedom of creativity and expression. She said she met Burma's leading comedian and hip hop artist, who have been banned from performing for years.

"You may not know it, but somewhere in a little tiny room in Burma or even in North Korea, someone is desperately trying to hear you or to see you, to experience you," Clinton told the Kennedy Center crowd. "And if they are lucky enough to make that connection, it can literally change lives and countries."

Entertainers who have gathered for the event include Stephen Colbert, Kevin Kline, Tracey Ullman, Anne Hathaway and others.

A surprise lineup of stars will perform as part of the nation's highest honor for those who have defined American culture through the arts.

CBS will broadcast the show on Dec. 27.

In a toast to Streep on Saturday night at the State Department, writer Nora Eph-



The 2011 Kennedy Center Honorees, front row from left, Sonny Rollins, Barbara Cook, back row from left, Yo-Yo Ma, Meryl Streep and Neil Diamond pose for a photo at the State Department after a dinner and reception on Saturday, Dec. 3, 2011 in Washington.

Associated Press

ron warned Clinton that the person who would someday play her on screen is the same woman who played Julia Child in "Julie and Julia" and British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in the upcoming "The Iron Lady." Streep stood up for a better look at the nation's top diplomat.

"It's inevitable," Ephron told

Clinton, drawing big laughs. "You met her tonight, and I'm sure you thought she was charming, but she was just soaking you up."

Streep, 62, has made more than 45 movies and won two Oscars in a career spanning Shakespeare to ABBA with the movie "Mamma Mia!" For her part, Streep said she is in awe of the accolades.

"Look where we are, look who's here," Streep told The Associated Press. "It's overwhelming. I feel very proud."

While in Washington, she has also met with women in Congress to push for a National Women's History Museum because, "as you'll notice, we don't have one," Streep said. She is working with organizers to try to secure a site on the National Mall.

Emily Blunt, a co-star from "The Devil Wears Prada," said Streep is unique for her devotion to her characters, taking on parts of their personas.

"It's funny, I feel like when we were doing 'The Devil Wears Prada,' she definitely adopted a certain cool on set, sort of remained very much in this reserved territory," Blunt said. "And then when my husband John (Krasinski) worked with her, she was playing a very vivacious, gregarious character, so she was just a ball of fun."

Diamond's familiar tunes, including "America" and "Cherry, Cherry" have had a defining impact on pop music. □

Sheriff: McCready didn't have OK to hide at house

TAMARA LUSH

Associated Press

ST. PETERSBURG, Florida (AP)

— By the time authorities took country singer Mindy McCready's 5-year-old son from her and into custody on Friday evening, one thing had already become apparent: her life has come to resemble a bad country song.

Since her emergence in the mid-1990s as a honey-voiced success story out of Nashville, McCready has been increasingly known for her personal troubles instead of her music.

This week's custody battle, where McCready took her son from his Florida home, was the latest in her brushes with the law.

Florida Department of Children and Families spokes-

woman Terri Durdaller wrote in an email Saturday that her agency was working with Arkansas state officials to bring McCready's son, Zander, back to his legal guardian, McCready's mother.

Officials say the boy is safe and in good health after he and McCready were found in a bedroom closet of an unoccupied Arkansas home.

"Zander is in Arkansas and we continue to arrange his swift arrival back to Florida," Durdaller wrote.

In Arkansas, Cleburne County Sheriff Marty Moss said Saturday that McCready didn't have permission to be in the unoccupied summer home where she was found Friday evening with her son. Authori-

ties continue to investigate, he said.

The sheriff's office said in a news release Saturday that McCready had been a visitor to the area. Authorities located her after receiving a report of "possible occupants in a summer home that was supposed to be unoccupied," the news release said.

Moss told The Associated Press on Saturday that he doesn't expect that McCready will face any charges for being at the unoccupied home.

Gayle Inge, McCready's mother, was tearful Friday night.

"I'm real excited that he's safe," she said. "But I can't explain what this is like. We feel for Mindy and we feel for Zander."



In this undated file photo, country singer Mindy McCready performs in Nashville, Tenn.

Associated Press

Inge said that her son — McCready's half-brother — texted McCready, who responded with a text that said her mother would never see her again.

"I want to wrap my arms around her and tell her that I love her," Inge said.

McCready, who turned 36 on Wednesday, did not respond to emails Friday and

Saturday.

Authorities say McCready took the boy during a visit late last month to her father's Florida home, where she was allowed to visit the boy. McCready's parents are divorced.

A Florida judge signed an order Thursday telling authorities to take the boy into custody and return him. □

The decadent left



ROSS DOUTHAT

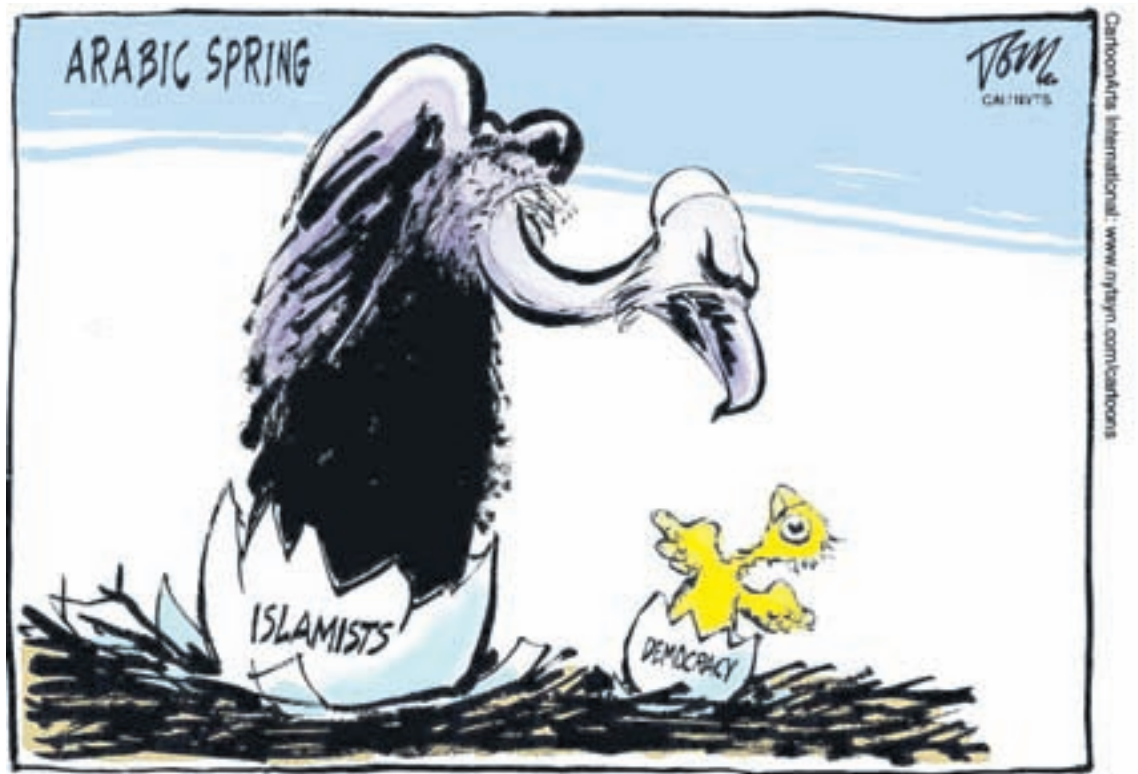
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In the days when Tea Party activists were crowding town hall meetings and Glenn Beck's fans were thronging the Washington Mall, a kind of existential despair settled over the American left. The country was mired in an economic crisis that most left-wingers believed was caused by the excesses of free-market capitalism, yet the only major protest movement belonged to the political right. What was the left good for, if it couldn't even persuade people to take to the streets? Why didn't liberalism have a Tea Party of its own? Now it has one. Or rather, it has several: the union-organized rallies across the Midwest earlier this year, which attacked budget cuts and defended public-sector pay; the environmentalist protests, complete with arrests outside the White House, against the proposed Keystone XL pipeline from Canada to the United States; and of course the tent cities of Occupy Wall Street, now entering winter hibernation but probably destined to return in force next year. Indeed, since the 2010 midterms, left-wing street theater has arguably eclipsed Tea Party activism as our politics' defining form of protest. Of these movements, Occupy Wall Street earned by far the most attention, while achieving the least in terms of actual policy. The union protests against Wisconsin's curbs on collective bargaining helped set the stage for the recent repudiation, via referendum, of similar legislation in Ohio. The environmental protesters haven't stopped the Keystone pipeline outright, but they induced President Barack Obama to delay its consideration until 2013.

The OWS protesters, on the other hand, haven't even settled on concrete political objectives. As two of the movement's more perceptive conservative critics — Matt Continetti in *The Weekly Standard* and James Panero in *The New Criterion* — have said, many protesters seemed more interested in founding a kind of Paris Commune or Oneida Community in Zuccotti Park in Manhattan than in actually participating in public-policy debates. This has led some liberals to argue that the Occupy protesters should find a way to imitate the more pragmatic efforts of unions and environmentalists. In a recent issue of *The New Yorker*, Jane Mayer highlighted "the difference between the focused, agenda-driven campaign" fought by critics of the Keystone pipeline

"and the free-form, leaderless one waged by the Occupiers." Given that anti-Keystone activists succeeded (at least temporarily), she wrote, "the Occupy movement could do worse than to learn from the pipeline protest." But there's a sense in which the pipeline protesters and Midwestern unions are exactly the people that the OWS crowd should not learn from, if they aspire to appeal to a wider audience than left-wing activists usually reach. Yes, Occupy Wall Street was dreamed up in part by flakes and populated in part by fantasists. But to the extent that the movement briefly captured the public's imagination, it was because it seemed to be doing what a decent left would exist to do: criticizing entrenched power, championing the common good and speaking for the many rather than the few. The union rallies and the Keystone demonstrations, by contrast, represented what you might call the decadent left, which fights for narrow interest groups rather than for the public as a whole. The Wisconsin protests didn't defend U.S. workers' right to bargain for their fair share of company profits, as traditional union protests have. They defended government employees' right to negotiate with elected officials over the division of taxpayer dollars — a recipe for profligacy that even liberal icons like Franklin Roosevelt and the AFL-CIO's George Meany once opposed. Likewise, the Keystone protesters haven't been defending "the interests of wage-earning Americans," to borrow the historian Michael Kazin's description of the historic purpose of the American left. They've been harnessing the power of the Democratic Party's wealthy environmentalist donors to actively kill off U.S. jobs. Stopping the pipeline won't drive down demand for fossil fuels, or prevent Canada's oil from being extracted and shipped around the world. But for a small group of activists and donors, keeping the pipeline out of their national backyard is all that counts, even if U.S. workers pay the price.

Even if it has failed to embrace plausible solutions, OWS at least picked a deserving target — what *National Review's* Reihan Salam describes as the "moral rupture" created by Wall Street's and Washington's betrayal of the public trust. Better a protest movement that casts itself (however quixotically) as the defender of "the 99 percent" than a protest movement that just represents Democratic interest groups. And better a left that flirts with utopianism than a left that adheres to the dictum attributed to Leonid Brezhnev during the Prague Spring: "Don't talk to me about 'socialism.' What we have, we hold." □



This is a big deal

THOMAS L. FRIEDMAN

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In many ways, President Barack Obama has been a disappointment on energy and the environment. He has been completely missing in action on the climate debate. His decision to block his own Environmental Protection Agency from setting new rules to cut smog levels was disappointing. And, while I believe in using the balance sheet of the U.S. government to spur clean-tech research and start-ups, Solyndra was a case of embarrassing excess — precisely what happens when you rely too much on government push not consumer pull, spurred by price and regulatory signals. But, for me, all is forgiven — because Obama came through big-time last month. He backed his great EPA administrator, Lisa Jackson, and Department of Transportation secretary, Ray LaHood, in producing a deal with all the top U.S.-based automakers that will go into effect in 2017 and require annual mileage improvements of 5 percent for cars, and a little less for light trucks and SUV's, until 2025 — when U.S. automakers will have to reach a total fleet average of 54.5 miles per gallon. The current average is 27.5 mpg.

This deal will help America's cars and trucks approach the mileage levels of Europe and Japan and spur innovation in power trains, aerodynamics, batteries, electric cars and steel and aluminum that will make cars lighter and safer. The EPA and the Transportation Department estimate that these new innovations will gradually add about \$2,000 to the cost of an average vehicle by 2025 and will save more than \$6,000 in gasoline purchases over the life of that car — savings that will go into the rest of the economy. And all that assumes that gasoline prices will only moderately increase and there are no innovation

breakthroughs beyond what we anticipate. If gasoline prices soar higher and innovation goes faster — both highly likely — the savings would be even more.

The new vehicles sold over the life of the program — including its first phase between 2012 and 2016 — are expected to save a total of 4 billion barrels of oil and prevent 2 billion metric tons of greenhouse gas pollution. This is a big deal — a legacy deal for Obama that will make a significant, long-term contribution to America's energy, environmental, health and national security agendas.

The compromise was worked out between the EPA and the Transportation Department with General Motors, Ford, Chrysler, Toyota, Honda, Nissan, BMW and six other major car companies. It was announced Nov. 16 and came about largely because once the Supreme Court ruled that carbon dioxide was a pollutant — and once California made clear that it and several other states were going to impose their own improved auto emissions standards, if the federal government didn't — the major auto companies saw the handwriting on the wall and entered into talks with the Obama administration on a deal that will transform the industry. The Global Automakers trade association — which endorsed the deal because it gives the industry long-term regulatory certainty to do research and invest — called the Obama plan a "comprehensive and harmonized national approach to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and improve fuel economy ... while providing manufacturers the needed flexibility and lead time to design and build advanced technology vehicles."

Dan Becker, director of the Safe Climate Campaign of the Center for Auto Safety, said the mileage deal "is the biggest single step



that any nation has taken to cut global warming pollution," but he cautioned that, like any Washington compromise, it does contain loopholes that "give the auto companies opportunities to behave irresponsibly — if they choose." If the companies' total fleet mix of cars and trucks stays roughly as projected, they would hit the 54.5 mpg target by 2025. But, because the deal allows for a weaker mileage standard for trucks than cars, Becker added, "if the industry as a whole decides to make many more trucks than now projected, we will not achieve the 54.5 mpg target, although average mileage would still improve significantly from today's levels." These critics are the same "conservatives for OPEC" who, after Congress agreed in 1975 on a 10-year program to raise the fleet average mileage of U.S. cars from 15 mpg to 27.5 mpg, got together not only to halt mileage improvements in U.S. vehicles during the Reagan administration, but to roll them back. This helped to drastically slow U.S. auto mileage innovation and ultimately helped to bankrupt the U.S. auto industry and make sure the United States remained addicted to oil. Of course, today's GOP, whose energy policy was best described by Lisa Jackson as "too dirty to fail" — i.e., we can't close any polluting power plants or impose cleaner air rules because it might cost jobs — is fighting a last-ditch effort to scuttle the deal. Rep. Darrell Issa, R-Calif. and chairman of the House oversight committee, is leading the charge to kill it. What a thing to be proud of. □

Comedians in chief mustn't be prudent

JASON ZINOMAN

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When it comes to political satire, are you better off than you were four years ago?

"The Daily Show" and "The Colbert Report" remain sharp despite losing many of their favorite targets from the Bush administration. "Funny or Die," the comedy site whose first video went online in 2007, has become a formidable player, recently scoring with a commercial parody in which Mike Tyson played Herman Cain, off-kilter casting that seems even more creepy in the wake of the sex scandals that ended his campaign.

Yet as we head into another general election campaign, "Saturday Night Live," the biggest national stage for presidential parody, still has not figured out how to make Barack Obama funny. In its long history of mocking presidents, no impression has made less of one.

To be fair Fred Armisen, who has played the president more than 30 times since early 2008, has a more difficult challenge than his predecessors. Obama doesn't have a thick accent or easily mocked tics (lip biting, eye squinting). When not delivering a speech, his affect is flavorless or elegant, neither very funny. And would it kill him to have a sex scandal? How about just a rumor?

While the best political comedy by Jon Stewart emerges out of conviction, "SNL" generally adopts a more detached approach. Any show whose original writing staff included Al Franken could not be described as fair and balanced, but Bill Clinton and Al Gore (both of whom were played best by the masterly Darrell Hammond) have received as harsh treatment as Republicans have. James Downey, the show's longtime writer of political sketches, described his preferred stance in "Live From New York," an oral history of "SNL" by Tom Shales and James Andrew Miller, as one without anger



Tina Fey as Gov. Sarah Palin and Will Ferrell as President George W. Bush during a scene of "Saturday Night Live," in an undated handout photo. As we head into another general election campaign, a critic argues that "SNL," the biggest national stage for presidential parody, still has not figured out how to make President Barack Obama funny.

(Dana Edelson/NBC via The New York Times)



Fred Armisen as President Barack Obama during a scene of "Saturday Night Live," in an undated handout photo.

(Dana Edelson/NBC via The New York Times)

or agenda.

Neither was necessary for "SNL" to mine laughs from Donald Trump, Herman Cain or Rick Perry, who provided fertile targets during the current Republican primary campaign. As the field winnows, and the general election promises weekly sketches with Obama, the prospect of more tepid gags about the president's inability to get angry does not bode well.

When it comes to stamping a politician in the public consciousness, "Saturday

Night Live" has no equal. Will Ferrell's George W. Bush was so popular that it spawned a Broadway show. It didn't matter that Gerald Ford was an athlete; Chevy Chase, who made little effort to look or sound like him, convinced America that Ford was a graceless klutz. As Sarah Palin, Tina Fey probably had the biggest impact of any comedian on the last election.

That's surely why politicians so often agree to appear on the show that merciless-

ly mocks them. Palin didn't sit down with David Letterman, but she did stand next to Lorne Michaels, the "SNL" producer, in a sketch. "SNL" has become such a powerful cultural force that the show doesn't need merely to piggyback the political scene. It can lead, deciding what exactly becomes the characteristic trait worthy of lampooning.

What's needed with Obama, I humbly suggest, is not tweaks, but a more imaginative style. Armisen's relatively understated per-

formance is too shackled to the real world. He nicely captures the president's cadence and his habit of starting sentences with an exasperatedly reasonable "Look," and ending emphatically. But accuracy is not insight, nor is it the goal. Being funny is.

Armisen would be wise to find inspiration in his show's greatest presidential impression: Dana Carvey as the elder George Bush.

Making that colorless patrician funny was as much a comic challenge as that facing Armisen. Carvey's early attempts were high concept riffs on the idea that he was a wimp trying to act tough. He began with straightforward mimicry, but through the 1988 campaign he gradually became more physically mannered and antic. By the time Bush was elected, Carvey's complete sentences turned into checklists of catch phrases ("Stay the course," "wouldn't be prudent") and elaborate evasions of anything concrete.

"People say the economy has problems," Carvey said in a robotic, high-pitched whine in an Oval Office address. "Try telling it to that guy out there in Oregon who is working on that thing, doing it, going round and round in the whole area out there."

Most of Carvey's sketches were solitary speeches delivered at a desk, with no gimmicks and relatively few jokes. The humor was rooted in character. What made Carvey such a thrillingly adventurous and funny performer is that he kept pushing his cartoonish character in more flamboyant directions.

His elaborate hand gestures became so ornamental that they looked like something out of the Peking Opera. As he refined the character, his language grew vaguer and vaguer, an evolution that was actually an articulate comment on the decline of clarity in political rhetoric. Sentences turned into fragments, then words turned into mumblings. □